

Israel gripped by public sector strike

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel was gripped by widespread industrial action again on Sunday as 300,000 state workers resumed a strike which has also left 1.5 million schoolchildren on extended summer vacation.

The strike action, which started with teachers refusing to attend school last Tuesday, is costing the economy \$13 million a day, economists said.

The strike spread across the public sector Thursday to affect ministries, water and electricity distribution, tax collection, posts and telecommunications, hospitals, customs, the courts, refineries, ports and railways.

Relations between workers and the government have been made more tense by an austerity-dominated draft budget, presented to the cabinet Sunday.

The draft budget for the coming year boosts military spending but foresees cuts in welfare spending and limitations on the right to strike.

The Histadrut trade union is demanding across-the-board pay increases of eight per cent for public sector workers while the government has proposed hikes of

no more than 1.25 per cent.

The union is also claiming extra pay for teachers when they take pupils on fieldtrips and a 25 per cent hike in headteachers' salaries.

The limitation on the right to strike proposed by Finance Minister Yacov Neeman is proving to be a red rag to a bull.

Neeman is arguing that the strikes should be declared in future illegal if unions do not obtain the approval of 50 per cent of employees concerned.

"This aggressive and anti-democratic proposal is a declaration of war which is creating a fissure between the government and workers," said Amir Peretz, secretary general of Histadrut.

Peretz, who was due to meet Neeman later Sunday, has threatened to step up the strike by extending action to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion international airport.

Dalia Rabin-Filosof, a Histadrut lawyer, accused the government of "not negotiating seriously with strikers whose demands were tabled more than a year ago."

"We want to get an increase in salaries of workers at the lower end of the

spectrum and to halt the massive increase in the number of employees on temporary or special contracts," she said.

The government has ordered workers in the customs authority, national insurance and the weapons research centre Raphael to return to work, a union source said.

Independently of the public sector, street cleaners in Tel Aviv have also been taking unlimited strike action since Thursday. The streets of the largest city in Israel have quickly turned into a large rubbish dump.

This setback on the social front has accompanied political difficulties for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Several ministers in his coalition government have been complaining that they have not been consulted over alleged secret contacts between Netanyahu and the Palestinians, Israeli radio reported.

His partners on the extreme right are threatening to walk out of the government if the talks lead to an Israeli withdrawal from more of the West Bank, the radio said.



FATEH MEMBERS RECEIVE TRAINING: Palestinian youths Sunday display the loading and firing of weapons during a graduation ceremony after completing a 45-day military course at Deir Al Balah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. About 130 volunteers from the Fatah youth organisation received intensive military training on the use of military arms (Reuters photo)

Iraq threatens 'necessary action' if sanctions remain

BAGHDAD (AP) — An Iraqi newspaper that reflects the views of the ruling Baath Party warned Sunday that Iraq will take "necessary action" if the U.N. Security Council does not lift punishing trade sanctions.

The front-page editorial in Al Thawra did not say what action was contemplated.

The paper also reacted angrily to an American and British draft resolution introduced to the Security Council last week. It calls for suspension of regular sanctions reviews until Iraq reverses its Aug. 5 decision to freeze cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors.

The sanctions — which ban air travel and limit the sale of oil, Iraq's economic mainstay — were imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Security Council has said they will not be lifted until U.N. inspectors certify that Iraq has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq insists that it has done so and says the inspectors have been working to prolong the sanctions on behalf of the United States.

Al Thawra accused the Security Council of ignoring its statements, saying the council "does not find an issue to discuss but an American-British draft resolution aimed at the suspension of the bi-monthly reviews of sanctions." The paper added: "If the Security Council succumbs again to the American blackmail, the leadership and the people have no choice but to take the necessary action conferred by its legal rights, national interests, independence and national pride."

The paper said the threat of suspending reviews "will not make Iraq back down of its demands, as long as the sanctions continue without a hint from the Security Council which shows an end to the sanctions is within sight."

The paper asserted that the U.N. Special Commission, which oversees weapons inspections, "receives instructions from Iraq's enemies." Iraq has long contended that the commission operates at the behest of the United States and Britain to prolong the sanctions.

'Qadhafi friend tried to buy Israeli company'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Lebanese-American businessman close to Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi tried to take over a major Israeli fuel company, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Sunday.

Roger Tamraz, a close friend of Qadhafi, attempted to take control of the Israeli firm Sonol by taking over divisions of its parent company Granit Hacamel.

Tamraz told the paper he had intended to take over the company in order to sell it some two million tonnes of petroleum products annually. Tamraz made his fortune in the oil business.

He said he was prepared to invest up to \$200 million, but backed off after what he called only preliminary contacts with the company.

Tamraz, a naturalised American citizen whose parents are of Lebanese origin, was involved in a campaign finance scandal linked to U.S. President Bill Clinton. He gave \$300,000 to the Democratic Party to gain access to Clinton, the paper said.

Israel grants water concessions to PNA

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel said on Sunday it has given the Palestinians the all-clear to drill 17 artesian wells in the West Bank to overcome chronic water shortages afflicting the area.

"We have agreed to a Palestinian Authority plan drawn up a just over 10 days ago to overcome the most urgent water shortage problems in the region," said Shlomo Dror, coordinator for Israeli activities in the occupied territories.

Dror told AFP that teams of Israeli and Palestinian experts had repaired faults in distribution networks in the Jenin and Bethlehem areas, and made plastic containers available to Palestinians living in Hebron.

The Palestinians lashed out at Israel last month, accusing it of failing to meet commitments on water supply and rejecting Israeli charges that waste and theft are the root cause of the shortages.

The Palestinians complain that each summer they suffer from water shortages in the West Bank while Jewish settlements have abundant supplies.

Under interim autonomy accords, Israel agreed to provide a certain amount of water each year to the West Bank and Gaza Strip but the Palestinians say supplies fall well short of the commitments.

Kuwaiti defence minister in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — Kuwait's defence minister, Sheikh Salem Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, arrived here Sunday for a 24-hour visit during which he is to hold talks with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Meguid.

Sheikh Salem told reporters the talks with the Arab League chief would focus on "the question of Kuwaiti prisoners held by Iraq" since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of the emirate.

Sheikh Salem heads a Kuwaiti committee tasked with determining the fate of the prisoners.

Iran's art collection coming out of cellar

TEHRAN (AP) — Like buried treasure, scores of original works by Picasso, Gauguin, Renoir and other Western masters have lain hidden in the vaults of a museum in Iran for nearly 20 years.

But for the first time since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the rich collection that reads like a who's who of Western art is expected to go on display early next year.

The paintings and sculptures were ordered collected for the state by the Iranian monarch Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his wife Farah Diba during the oil boom of the 1970s.

But when the Shah was overthrown by the revolution, most pieces at the purpose-built Museum of Contemporary Arts were locked away by the new government, which thumbed its nose at all things Western.

The collection has remained in the museum's vaults, while the galleries above are filled with kitsch revolutionary art and Islamic pieces.

Only works by Iranian masters and a half-dozen lithographs by Picasso, Chagall and Miro are displayed from the old collection.

The exhibits draw few visitors, even on weekends.

But the May 1997 election of a new Iranian president has brought sweeping political changes, affecting attitudes about nearly everything — including art.

A former minister of culture, President Mohammad Khatami has rescued Iran's art scene from years of isolation, even encouraging cultural exchanges with the United States, considered Iran's arch-enemy by hard-line revolutionaries.

At the Museum of Contemporary Arts, a

new curator is busy readying galleries where works by the likes of Kandinsky, Monet, Pissarro, Braque, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pollock and pop art icon Andy Warhol will be shown.

"New facilities currently being built to display our treasury of Western art should be ready by the end of this year, and so by early 1999 the galleries should be open to the public," said Alireza Sami Azar, the curator.

He said that some works are even being loaned abroad. A Gauguin was recently sent for an exhibition in Switzerland of the French master's works.

Despite new attitudes, however, some prized possessions will remain locked up. Displaying nudes or semi-nudes would run into laws requiring women to be draped from head to foot whenever they venture outdoors.

Even a bronze statue of a woman watering crops at the museum's main entrance has not escaped the Islamic rules. She now wears a scarf, crudely added in bronze after the revolution.

Nearby, Swiss sculptor Max Bill's bronze of a dancing woman was spared similar zeal, probably because the abstract figure-eight magically transforms into a graceful dancer only when viewed from a certain angle.

Since the revolution, that sculpture and a few others scattered around the museum's manicured lawn are the only hint of what's locked up inside. Few passersby recognise the sculptures as works by Henry Moore, Alexander Calder and Alberto Giacometti.

In the revolution and its tumultuous aftermath, many rare Iranian antiquities and art works were smuggled out of Iran

and sold to wealthy clients in Europe, the United States and Asia.

But the museum's collection remained largely intact, locked up in a climate-controlled vault.

"If you consider the turmoil of the revolution, and how pieces in the collection could have been defaced, destroyed or stolen in that chaos, then locking them up was the best thing that could have happened," said Alireza Sami Azar.

But Adl, who has made a hobby of recovering stolen Iranian art, knows that not every item in the collection is still in Iran.

Four years ago Adl arranged the exchange of Willem de Kooning's Woman III, the third canvas in a series of six, for an ancient Persian manuscript.

The de Kooning, later bought by U.S. entertainment executive David Geffen, was traded for the Shahnameh, or Book of Kings. In exquisite detail, the work illustrates the accession to the throne of Shah Tahmasp of Persia in 1524.

Iran got most of the manuscript — acknowledged as one of the world's great masterpieces — but Adl said previous owners had ripped out and sold some pages piecemeal.

The Shahnameh was acquired in a trade because no one in revolutionary Iran could advocate buying a work of art, even a piece of Iranian history. An arbitrary price of \$20 million was placed both on the de Kooning and the Shahnameh.

"One reason we exchanged the de Kooning was because it was badly done and was falling apart," said Adl. "The other was that the nude couldn't be shown in Iran anyway."

12 Kurdish rebels killed in Turkey despite offered ceasefire

ANKARA (AFP) — Twelve members of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) were killed by Turkish security forces in the past week, officials said — despite a ceasefire declared by the armed separatist organisation.

The administration of Diyarbakir,

which oversees the fight against the PKK in its homeland in Turkey's southeast, said eight of the rebels were killed in an operation in Van province, while the four others were killed in other sweeps close to the Iraqi and Syrian borders.

Ankara rejected the unilateral ceasefire

announced by PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan which took effect Sept. 1 and was to run to next April, saying the separatist group was a "terrorist organisation" with no role as a political negotiator.

There was no immediate comment from the PKK on the announced deaths

of its members.

However, in an interview with the pro-Kurdish Ulkede Gundem newspaper published Sunday, Ocalan said his group "will wait a few more weeks to understand" the Turkish government's response to the ceasefire.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — Highlander

15:30 Drama — The Genie From Down Under

16:00Drama — Neighbours

16:30Doc. — Last Frontiers

17:00French Programme — Thalassa

18:00Sea Quest (Ep. 2)

19:00Le Journal

19:15 French Programme — Science Actualities

19:30News headlines

19:35Comedy — Hope and Gloria

20:00Prospective

20:30What's Your Poison

21:10Good Guys, Bad Guys

22:00News in English

22:30 Mini-series — Pandora's Clock (Pt. 2 of 2)

23:59End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:50Fajr

06:09(Sunrise) Duha

12:34Dhuhr

16:08Asr

18:58Maghreb

20:17Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

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Anglican Church Tel. 4624833/4624811.

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

will prevail with temperatures rising slightly and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman19/34

Aqaba25/39

Deserts18/36

Jordan Valley24/39

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 32, Aqaba 38 Humidity readings: Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun27

Jerash33

Um Qays34

Madaba33

Petra35

Dead Sea39

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad5346070

Dr. Khalid Abdo4657129

Dr. Bassam Karadshah4389200

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi4894788

Firas pharmacy5661912

Al Asma pharmacy5347632

Nairokh pharmacy4636732

Al Salam pharmacy4636730

Yacoub pharmacy4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy4637660

Najib pharmacy5347632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh250080

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Lawzi989601

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints: 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone4623101

Repairs5661101

Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101

Jordan Televisi.4773111

Radio Jordan4774111

Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority5815615

Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)99099

IRBID:

Princess Busma Hospital(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital(02)27275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

09:45New Delhi (RJ)

10:20Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:35Beirut (RJ)

17:00Cairo (RJ)

17:30London (RJ)

17:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:15Istanbul (RJ)

18:45Kuwait (RJ)

19:40Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

20:30New Delhi (add) (RJ)

00:15Bangkok, Sharjah (RJ)

03:55 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:45Sanaa (RJ)

09:30Jeddah (RJ)

09:30Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights

10:30Cairo (MS)

14:10Bahrain (GF)

15:05Vienna (OS)

15:40Doha (QR)

15:45Khartoum (SD)

18:40Beirut (ME)

19:05Frankfurt (LH)

19:45Dubai (EK)

20:30Kuwait (add) (KU)

22:15Istanbul (SD)

22:25Tel Aviv (LY)

23:45Athens, Beirut (OA)

01:30 Amsterdam, Damascus (EK)

Royal Wings (RW)

10:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport) (RW)

18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

22:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)

22:15 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15Beirut (RJ)

08:00 Doha, New Delhi (add) (RJ)

11:45Frankfurt, London (RJ)

12:20Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:30Istanbul (RJ)

12:45Kuwait (RJ)

13:15Cairo (RJ)

21:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

21:40Damascus (RJ)

22:05Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

22:25Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

23:25Tehran (RJ)

23:45Sanaa (RJ)

00:30 Tuzor (Tunisia) (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:15Istanbul (TK)

06:35Larnaca (CY)

07:30Paris (AF)

08:20London (AF)

11:30Cairo (MS)

15:00Bahrain (GF)

15:50Vienna (OS)

16:30Doha (QR)

16:45Istanbul (SD)

20:00Beirut (ME)

20:45Dubai (EK)

21:45Kuwait (add) (KU)

23:10Tel Aviv (LY)

23:15Khartoum (SD)

02:30Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)

08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)

09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)

20:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)

21:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Major Jerash water source to reopen within 'two days' — deputy

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — A major spring in Jerash that had been blocked by the Jerash Water Authority because of possible contamination will be allowed to flow again as soon as the water has been found fit for human consumption, officials said Sunday.

Deputy Salameh Hiani, head of the Lower House's Water and Agriculture Committee, said the government last week closed off Qirwan spring after it was discovered that wastewater had seeped into the spring, which provides 60-100 cubic metres per hour to the 30,000 residents of the Greco-Roman city.

"Official tests conducted Saturday on the spring's water were negative," Hiani told the Jordan Times. "The spring will flow again within the next two days."

He added that some residential areas, such as Souf Refugee Camp, are situated near water springs without being linked to the city's wastewater network.

"As a result, wastewater coming out of these areas seeps into water springs and causes pollution," Hiani explained.

Deputy Riad Daoud, a member of the committee, blamed the problem on "improper administrative planning" and urged the government to link all parts of Jerash to the main wastewater network in order to avoid such problems.

"The head of the Jerash Water Department and other officials promised to solve the problem soon," Daoud said. "I believe the problem was [partially] solved because some residential areas near the spring were quickly linked to the treatment network."

Hiani said the committee will meet to discuss what action should be taken regarding the issue if any new developments occur.



PRINCESS SARVATH RECEIVES TURKISH PM'S WIFE: HRH Princess Sarvath on Sunday talks with Berna Yilmaz, wife of Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, who began an official visit to the Kingdom yesterday. Also attending the audience were the wives of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani (Photo by Boghos)

Trial of alleged student murderer postponed

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Sunday postponed until Thursday the case of 19-year-old Sa'ed Qashash, a student accused of murdering 12 people including 11 family members, because the defendant did not appoint a defence lawyer.

Qashash stood before the court tribunal and said he did not appoint a lawyer. The court then appointed a defence attorney for him and set the new date for later this week.

According to authorities, Qashash confessed to killing his mother, father, other family members and his school friend, because "they were harassing him about his academic performance and because his family threatened to kick him out if he failed the Tawjihi (state-run high school exams) for the second time."

The suspect lured his family members one after the other to the basement of

the family house, and shot each of them while they had their backs to him. He then piled their bodies there and blocked its windows and door with bricks and cement, according to the prosecution's charge sheet.

The tribunal was presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and was comprised of Judges Mifteh Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan.

Ruling on alleged 'honour' crime expected today

Meanwhile, the same court is expected to issue a verdict today in the case of a 40-year-old man charged with killing his wife and four of his six children in Karak in May 1997, according to judicial sources.

Awad Mohammad reportedly opened fire on his family shortly after midnight on May 13, killing his 35-year-old wife Samar Salah and his children Ahmad, seven, Basma, six, Sahar, 18 months and

Ibrahim, three months. According to authorities, shortly after his arrest Mohammad told police that he killed his wife and children "to cleanse his family's honour."

According to the prosecution's charge sheet, the suspect, who had been married to Samar since 1987 and resided in several cities and countries, became suspicious of his wife's conduct five years into their marriage.

The charge sheet also stated that in mid-1996, Mohammad plotted to kill his wife and children, whom he believed were not his, and purchased a gun.

On the night of the murder, the defendant locked the doors of his house and opened fire on his wife and six children, the charge sheet said.

Police surgeons previously testified in court that paternity tests performed on the child victims, who were all shot at close range, indicated that they were Mohammad's children.

Medical association examines doctors' accreditation credentials

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — The Jordan Medical Association is currently evaluating the certificates of nearly 20 member doctors seeking to obtain the title of specialist in line with the society's regulations, officials said Sunday.

Jordan Medical Board (JMB) Secretary General Tawfiq Loubani said the members in question were never registered as specialists in the association, thus sparking a 16-year-old accreditation problem.

An eight-member committee formed by the association last month is trying to solve the problem by evaluating their certificates.

These doctors "obtained their specialist degrees before the Jordan Medical Board was set up in 1982 and did not register in the association as specialists," said Loubani.

"Before the law was issued, the association was authorised to grant doctors who obtained specialist degrees in the country or abroad the title of specialist if their certificates met the JMA regulations of 1977 concerning professional titles," Loubani told the Jordan Times.

In 1982, the medical board denied the association the authority to grant doctors the title of specialist and asked them to sit for the board exam, a decision that was effective until 1991.

Loubani said specialists who were registered in the association before 1982 were not affected by the medical board's regulation.

Meanwhile, Bassam Keswani, a member of the committee seeking to sort out the certification problem, said the commission will hold several meetings to evaluate the certificates of the specialists. He said those who meet the

conditions set in the 1977 regulations on professional titles would be granted their titles accordingly while those who fail to meet the requirements would remain general practitioners.

"These specialists were already practising in the Jordan University Hospital, the Health Ministry and the Royal Medical Services, so it was not important to them to be registered as specialists," Keswani said.

The eight-member committee includes doctors from the Royal Medical Services, the Jordan University Hospital and the Health Ministry as well as JMA doctors.

"If a doctor feels that he/she has been treated unfairly by the committee, then he/she can turn to another committee which is chaired by the health minister in order to appeal, but the decision of this committee will be final," Keswani said.

Ministry halts financial assistance to 'thousands of ineligible families'

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — The Ministry of Social Development has stopped monthly assistance to thousands of families after a survey found they do not qualify under the programme's criteria, officials said Sunday.

Social Development Minister Mohammad Mamser said the ministry conducted a survey of the 35,000 families who were receiving monthly stipends of up to JD82 and discovered that thousands were ineligible to receive the aid.

But Mamser said that by the end of this year, the number of families that will be entitled to monthly assistance will reach 40,000 — an increase of around 5,000 families over recent years.

"We had social researchers enter each and every home of the 35,000 families to assess whether they meet the criteria to receive assistance," said Mamser, explaining how the ministry's survey was carried out.

"It was found out that some families are no longer eligible to receive assistance, and they were dropped from the programme," said Mamser. He added that some households have not been assessed in nearly 10 years, although the ministry requires an annual check.

Mamser denied news reports that the ministry has temporarily suspended emergency cash aid provided through the fund pending a comprehensive policy

review.

But officials were quoted earlier as saying that a suspension was applied and will remain effective until the ministry has re-examined the current system to ensure a fair distribution of funds.

Mamser has said that millions of dinars spent last year on helping the country's poor were "ineffective" due mainly to the lack of planning and coordination between governmental and non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

"We are providing care for the poor, disabled, widows, and orphans but we are not tackling the causes of poverty," Mamser told the Jordan Times. He said 52 organisations,

governmental, non-governmental, private sector and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, together spent JD140 million in social assistance programmes benefiting nearly 65,000 families.

But he added that this was "not enough." "A great deal of funds go where they should not," Mamser said in an earlier interview. "Organisations implement programmes without taking into account priorities and pressing problems; there is repetition and duplication of efforts."

According to ministry figures, nearly 22 per cent of the population live in absolute poverty while 8.9 per cent are classified in object poverty.

Deputies speak out for senators retaining seats in new government

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh

AMMAN — The controversy stirred by the inclusion of four senators in the new government has taken a new turn with deputies now preferring that the ministers retain their seats in the Senate.

The controversy started when deputies protested that Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh did not consult the House prior to forming his government, mandated on August 20. The deputies were also protesting the inclusion of senators but no deputies in the Cabinet.

After visiting His Majesty King Hussein in Washington late last month, Tarawneh said the King stressed the need for separation of powers among the branches of government.

Deputies, however, changed their stand, fearing that such a move would set a precedent preventing them from becoming ministers in the future.

"The pillars of democracy are based on the separation of powers," said Deputy Ghaleb Zou'bi, head of the Lower House Legal Committee. "But this separation does not mean total isolation of these authorities from one another."

"Complete isolation of powers does not exist in

practical terms, only in theory," he added.

Zou'bi, who was in favour of the senators staying in the House, said the Constitution, since its ratification in 1952, has allowed for the inclusion of parliamentarians in governments.

The four senators in the Tarawneh government are: Taher Kanaan, minister of state for development affairs; Jawdat Shoul, minister of justice; Tawfiq Khreishan, minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment and Nayef Qadi, minister of interior.

"Including deputies in governments necessarily means having watchdogs monitoring its performance," said House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour in a recent press report.

Former Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin stressed that the Constitution allowed for the inclusion of deputies in the executive branch and said the option should be left open.

"I think the senators should keep their posts," he said. "The precedent of this administrative decision could affect the constitutional prerogative."

But according to Minister of Administrative Development and Parliamentary Affairs Bassam Emoush,

holding dual offices has its own shortcomings.

"In the current circumstances, I am in favour of the complete separation of powers, so that Parliament can fulfil its role in monitoring the government and holding it accountable for its actions," said Emoush, who served as an Islamist deputy in the 12th Parliament.

He added that due to the inclusion of deputies in the government at that time, there was an imbalance in priorities.

"Deputies felt obliged to pass certain legislation in Parliament because they were Cabinet members," he said.

According to Emoush, the four senators have submitted their resignations from the Upper House to President Zeid Rifai. He said Rifai indicated he would listen to deputies' opinions on the matter before taking a decision on whether to accept the resignations or not.

Many governments in the past included deputies. Both former Prime Ministers Taher Masri and Abdul Karim Kabariti were members of the House when they formed their governments in 1992 and 1996 respectively. Kabariti had 22 deputies in his government while Masri had 12.

Italian Film Week opens tonight

By Randa Naffa

AMMAN — The 13th Italian Film Week opens today at the main theatre of the Royal Cultural Centre with a total of five films on the bill for Amman audiences, according to Italian Ambassador Francesco Cerulli.

The proceeds of Film Week, which is organised by the Italian Embassy and the Ministry of Culture, will go to Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged, according to the embassy.

Cerulli said Film Week marks a further reflection of the continuing deep and

strong relations between Jordan and Italy.

The event is launched under the patronage of HRH Princess Majda Ra'd, president of the society, who conveyed hope that the funds raised would enable the society to extend educational, rehabilitative and vocational services to hundreds of Jordanians with physical disabilities.

The five Italian films featured this week will be subtitled in English, and tickets will be sold at JD2 for adults and JD1 for students. Each film will premiere at 8 p.m. on one night and will be repeated the next evening at 5 p.m.

The week starts tonight at 8 p.m. with "Slow Ivo," directed by Alessandro Benvenuti. On Tuesday, the embassy will show "Cous Cous," by Umberto Spinazzola, on Wednesday "Isola," by Maurizio Fiume, on Thursday "Festival," by the famous director Pupi Avati, and on Saturday "The Great Pumpkin," directed by Francesca Archibugi.

Film Week is part of a cultural agreement signed between Jordan and Italy in 1975 and has been renewed every three years. It allows Jordanian audiences to experience some of the latest Italian films, Cerulli added.

Regent: Talk about military alliances, axes is 'baseless'

(Continued from page 1)

a "comprehensive system" that includes all the countries in the region. Prince Hassan said that among the issues the proposed "system" will tackle is the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

"I would like to emphasise our concern for peace first... and our interest in the safety and security of all citizens of this troubled region," the Crown Prince told reporters.

"This region has no conflict resolution, or conflict prevention, initiative of any kind... the countries of the region have no forum in which to discuss these issues," the Regent said.

"What we have called for in the past is a methodology... The future requires new initiatives, new institutions, but most of all, requires the promotion of conversation between all countries in the region inclusive of all and exclusive of none," the Regent added.

"It can be done in steps, it has to be done over a period of time," Prince

Hassan said following his talks with the Turkish premier.

The Regent called for regional efforts to uphold weapons of mass destruction from the region.

"We believe that in terms of the region, that the recent development, the nuclear explosions in the South Asian context in India and Pakistan have made the reality of weapons of mass destruction a reality and a concern for us all," he said.

"It is ironic and sad that this is the only region in the world where there is no security agenda or identity. Yes, we are interested in political breakthroughs but yet we are also interested in making this extended region from Morocco to Sudan to Kazakhstan a stable region for all," the Regent said.

The Crown Prince was responding to a question on recent statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who called for the establishment of a "security system" between Tel Aviv and Ankara.

"The Turkish-Israeli relations are

sovereign, they have to do with the government of Turkey and the government of Israel."

"As far as facts are concerned, I would like to remind you that both of our countries [Jordan and Turkey] were part of a pact which in 1958 saw its demise with the brutal massacre of tens of women and children of our family in Baghdad," he said.

"I would like to make it very very clear that what we are speaking about here is a methodology for conversation that will build safety and security for all in the region," Prince Hassan said.

The Regent noted that the proposed "multilateral talks" are not a call for "multilateral talks" as originated in the Madrid process or Oslo process... they have nothing to do directly with the Arab-Israeli process."

For his part, the Turkish premier emphasised that his country's military cooperation with Israel was not directed against any country in the region.

The Turkish-Israeli military cooperation "cannot be regarded as an alliance.

I think if a comprehensive peace is achieved, then this bilateral mechanism can be transformed to a multilateral conflict prevention treaty."

In a separate conference with Prime Minister Tarawneh, Yilmaz said "every country which attaches importance to peace and stability in the region and is not involved in terrorism is invited to this cooperation."

Tarawneh said the bilateral agreement between Turkey and Israel is something "with which we do not interfere."

"As far as Jordan is concerned, we made very clear time and again, that we are not part of any coalition or alliance of a security nature," he said.

"We have very excellent relations with Turkey. This is not a new thing, it goes back many years. We cherish our relations with Turkey in all fields, including military cooperation."

"Our call was always for a comprehensive outlook that would take in all the countries in the region and not just to join any kind of bilateral agreements," said Tarawneh adding that Jordan does not interfere in other countries' bilateral agreements and respects such accords as sovereign.

"We have been assured by our Turkish brothers that this kind of cooperation is not directed against anybody," the prime minister said.

He said Amman wants to enhance its military cooperation with Ankara to include "upgrading, maintenance of [Jordan Armed Forces] weapons and exchanging expertise. We have discussed a lot of potentialities in the military sphere where the two sides can be involved."

The two premiers said that during their talks, they discussed combating terrorism in the region with the participation of all concerned parties.

"Turkey is against any kinds of terrorism, and we are aware of the fact that terrorism cannot survive if all countries share the same attitude and the same standards against it," Yilmaz said.

expected to leave for Tel Aviv on the second leg of a regional tour that will take him also to the Palestinian self-rule areas, expressed his country's concern over the stalemate in the peace process.

"I conveyed to His Royal Highness, Turkish concern over the present stalemate in the peace process and the importance Turkey has for the preservation of peace and stability in our region," he said. "Turkey supports all efforts aimed at bringing about a breakthrough in the present stalemate."

Yilmaz added that Ankara was ready to attend a proposed international conference to resolve the deadlock in the peace process.

Following the Tarawneh-Yilmaz meeting, the two sides signed three agreements to enhance cooperation in the fields of trade, agriculture and culture.

Yilmaz said the two sides agreed to develop economic cooperation in a bid to increase the trade volume between them.

what's going on

FILM
* "Gervaise" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
LECTURE
* "The Arab National Security and the Twenty First Century" (in Arabic) by Dr. Mousa Alawi at Abdul Hameed Shoroun Foundation, Jabel Amman at 7:00 p.m.
13TH ITALIAN FILM WEEK
* "Ivo il tardino (Slow Ivo)" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
* Two films entitled "Ivo il tardino" and "Cous Cous" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Tuesday Sept. 8 at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively.
DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL
* "Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:
* Film entitled "Arshile Gorky (1904-1948)" on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
EXHIBITIONS
* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sabel Hiani at the Main House.
* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.
* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.
* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'seh at the Museum.

DEPARTURES		
Royal Jordanian (RJ)	07:15	Amman to London
08:00	Amman to London	
11:45	Amman to London	
12:30	Amman to London	
12:45	Amman to London	
13:15	Amman to London	
21:15	Amman to London	
21:40	Amman to London	
22:45	Amman to London	
23:25	Amman to London	
23:45	Amman to London	
00:30	Amman to London	

Other flights		
06:15	Amman to London	
06:35	Amman to London	
07:30	Amman to London	
08:20	Amman to London	
11:30	Amman to London	
15:00	Amman to London	
15:20	Amman to London	
16:30	Amman to London	
16:45	Amman to London	
20:00	Amman to London	
20:45	Amman to London	
21:45	Amman to London	
23:10	Amman to London	
23:15	Amman to London	
02:30	Amman to London	

Royal Wings (RW)		
08:00	Amman to London	
09:30	Amman to London	
20:45	Amman to London	
21:30	Amman to London	

Kosovo aid could complicate military intervention

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — Relief workers are being sent to fill the void in violent Kosovo even though their presence could complicate the search for peace, diplomats warned Sunday.

"We can't risk tens of thousands of refugees being stranded without proper food and shelter when winter arrives, so the aid operation is being geared up and relief workers being ordered in," said a Western diplomat who asked not to be named.

"But if the situation in Kosovo continues to deteriorate and NATO military intervention is required, all these unarmed men and women from the United States and Europe could be used as hostages or human shields to block the military action that may yet be needed to solve the problems here. It's worrying."

If the tragedy in this southern Serb province seems familiar, that's because a similar sequence of events unfolded next door in Bosnia a few years ago.

There, governments wrung their hands while a political crisis in the Balkans slid slowly into war. Western diplomats threatened military intervention and scrambled to negotiate a cease-fire.

Unarmed observers were soon deployed to monitor the conflict and doves of international relief workers were sent to save the lives of homeless civilians in their hundreds of thousands.

In Kosovo, like Bosnia, what started out as a political problem is now a war being treated by the West primarily as a humanitarian crisis.

U.N. officials estimate that 265,000 Kosovars, most of them ethnic Albanians, have been driven from their homes. As many as 50,000 of those displaced are thought to be living in the rough on hill-sides and in forests.

Alarmed by the approach of winter, relief experts and administrators from the United Nations, the United States and a number of aid organisations, are gearing up for a massive programme of humanitarian assistance in Kosovo.

Analysts say it remains to be seen whether these humanitarian agencies and workers will become an obstacle to the credible threat and use of outside military force, without which achieving a cease-fire in Kosovo may be impossible.

That's precisely what happened in Bosnia where

observers, aid workers and lightly-armed U.N. peacekeepers dispersed across the country and soon became pawns used to stave off the air and artillery strikes that finally ended the war in its fourth year.

All were potential victims and hostages. Bosnian Serbs even chained some peacekeepers to bridges outside their capital, Pale, to keep NATO from bombing.

Months of delicate manoeuvring were required to finally extricate this small army of foreign non-combatants from the war zone so NATO war planes and artillery could do the U.N.'s bidding.

"There's no alternative to a massive humanitarian action in Kosovo because so many people will die otherwise," said Chris Bennet, Director of Balkan Operations for the International Crisis Group, a lobby group based in Brussels.

"The tragedy is that there is no humanitarian solution in Kosovo. Once the focus is on humanitarian operations we run the risk of diverting attention from the underlying political and military problems and of

short-circuiting the force option."

Kosovo has a population of 1.8 million people, 90 per cent of them ethnic Albanians. It has been under harsh direct rule from Belgrade since 1989.

An armed ethnic Albanian insurgency known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is fighting for independence. The KLA goal, if not its violent tactics, is supported overwhelmingly by the province's majority population.

After gains this spring KLA units have been battered by a recent Serb counter-offensive that has destroyed many separatist strongholds and wreaked havoc on hundreds of ethnic Albanian villages across Kosovo.

Western diplomats trying to broker a cease-fire caution against over-optimism and warn that months of "extremely tough" peace negotiations lie ahead.

NATO generals who would oversee any military strike in Kosovo are said to be wary, and their American and European political masters seem as divided over Kosovo as they were for years over intervention in Bosnia.

EU offers more aid for Kosovo

SALZBURG, Austria (AFP) — The European Union is to provide \$5.5 million in extra humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of refugees in the Serb province of Kosovo, the Austrian foreign minister announced Sunday.

The aid would go towards a Franco-German operation to help transport refugees back to their homes from the mountains and forests where they have taken refuge to escape the fighting, said Wolfgang Schuessel, the current EU rotating president.

It would also be used to help the refugees rebuild homes destroyed in the fighting.

Schuessel said that there was a "glimmer of hope" that an end could be brought to the Kosovo crisis based on the interim agreement being hammered out by the U.S. special envoy Christopher Hill.

Hill has been involved in shuttle diplomacy between Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade and the moderate ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.

The EU foreign ministers examined the sanctions they already have in place against Yugoslavia, the two-member federation which is dominated by Serbia, such as a freeze on bank assets and visa restrictions.

A further sanction — a boycott of the Yugoslav airline JAT — has now been fully agreed and it was a question of assuring its proper implementation, said EC Commissioner Hans Van den Broeck.

British and Greek objections had sidelined the action during the summer months, but these have been overcome.

Van den Broeck also said that other Central and Eastern European countries could be involved in the JAT boycott.

Schuessel said that it was important to ensure that "radical forces at play are not allowed to torpedo" existing peace efforts, citing the Kosovo Liberation Army which has refused to sit around the negotiating table.

He also said that the EU wanted to see "more cooperation from President Milosevic."

Schuessel said there had been broad support for the naming of a special EU envoy for Kosovo, and that the matter would be pursued at upcoming EU Council meetings.

Chinese president congratulates North Korean strongman

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin has congratulated North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il on his reelection to the nation's top military post, ignoring his failure to take up the post of president as expected. Xinhua reported Sunday.

In a direct congratulatory message usually reserved for heads of state, Jiang pledged unremitting efforts to strengthen relations with North Korea, which has been a long-term ally of Beijing.

"I am happy to learn you have been reelected the National Defence Commission chairman... at the first session of the 10th Supreme People's Assembly," Jiang said in a telegramme dispatched directly after the election Saturday.

"Through the joint efforts of the two parties, two governments and two nations, friendly relations of cooperation will be further con-

solidated and developed," he added.

Kim, 56, was reelected chairman of the nation's highest body, the National Defence Commission (NDC), as parliament significantly increased his powers.

But it failed to name Kim president as many had expected, abolishing the post in deference to his father and the nation's late founder Kim Il-Sung, who was dubbed "eternal president." Instead deputies of the Supreme People's Assembly overhauled key state bodies to consolidate Kim junior's supremacy at the most sweeping shake-up in 27 years, South Korean official monitors said Sunday.

Chinese experts on North Korea expressed some surprise the post of president was left vacant.

"In state-to-state relations, it is very difficult to not have a president. We are still examining the sig-

nificance of this move," said one expert who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

He said negotiations had been under way for Kim to pay a state visit to China once he took on the presidency, but this would now be impossible for protocol reasons.

China went to North Korea's aid in the 1950-53 Korean war and declared ties with North were "as close as lips and teeth."

But the collapse of the Soviet Union and China's foray into capitalism have blunted the relationship, as has Beijing's decision in the early 1990s to establish diplomatic relations with arch-rival Seoul.

However, North Korea's state-run news agency was quick to make the most of Jiang's congratulatory message, issuing a report early Sunday morning and saying Kim also received a floral basket from the Chinese government.

U.S. intelligence reports — backed up by Tokyo and Seoul



Japan's most famed movie director Akira Kurosawa, dubbed the emperor of Japanese cinema for films such as 'The Seven Samurai' and 'Rashomon', died at his home in Tokyo at the age of 88. Kurosawa's movies put Japanese cinema on the international map and inspired U.S. film makers such as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas (Reuters photo)

Japanese film director Kurosawa dies at 88

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa, who inspired the world of cinema with his epic samurai dramas such as "Rashomon" and "The Shadow Warrior", died at his home Sunday, his family said. He was 88.

Known as the "emperor of Japanese cinema," Kurosawa also baffled producers at home with his costly perfectionist endeavours, but attracted generations of directors worldwide, including Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas.

He left behind 30 films spanning half a century and Japan's golden days of cinema, which all but ended in December last year when Toshiro Mifune, who rose to international stardom through Kurosawa's classics, died at 77.

Kurosawa and Mifune together impressed the world with 16 films, including "Rashomon" and "The Seven Samurai", dazzling with clearcut themes, bold plots and innovative techniques with the use of slow motion and multiple cameras.

"Rashomon", a crime story set in medieval Japan, was awarded the "Golden Lion" grand prize at the 1951 Venice Film Festival, becoming the first Japanese film to win international accolade. The move was also decorated with the Academy Foreign Movie Award in 1952.

Mifune was also cast in "The Seven Samurai" in 1954, portraying a peasant-turned samurai, leading farmer resistance against bandits. The movie inspired a Hollywood Western remake, "The Magnificent

Seven" (1960) starring Yul Brynner.

Kurosawa, whose masterpieces also included "Kagemusha (The Shadow Warrior)" (1980), "Ran" (1985) and "Dreams" in 1990, received an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement as a cinema artist at the annual Academy Awards in 1990.

"Ran" was financed by the French producer Serge Silberman, and the capital for "Dreams" was guaranteed by the U.S. group Warner Brothers.

"Dreams", recreating eight of Kurosawa's dreams premised by his nostalgia for childhood and his fear of the destruction of nature, also owed to the friendship and respect of two Hollywood greats, Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

Spielberg's company Amblin Entertainment marketed the production and Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic cooperated with its special effects.

Asked why Japanese producers were cool to his films at the time of the shooting of "Dreams", Kurosawa replied: "I have the same question. Actually, they just don't seem to understand the content of the screenplay."

Kurosawa's last movie "Madadayo" (1993), which depicted the heart-to-heart relationship between a retired university teacher and his former students, marked the 50th anniversary of his career as film director.

Born into the family of a junior high school director in

Tokyo in 1910, Kurosawa abandoned his aspiration to become a painter and joined PCL Studios, one of the prewar predecessors of Toho Co., in 1936.

Kurosawa made his director's debut with "Sugata Sanshiro" in 1943, an entertaining film about a young judo hero.

"The Throne of Blood" (1957), a Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth, and the crime thriller "High and Low" (1963) added to his international fame.

However, he suffered setbacks in the mid-1960s, when two movie projects funded with U.S. capital failed to materialise, and his first effort as an independent director and his first full-colour movie — "Dodesukaden" (1970) — failed. He attempted suicide in 1971. The Soviet-sponsored "Dersu Uzala" marked his international comeback in 1975. It earned him the gold prize at the Moscow Film Festival and an Oscar as best foreign-language movie.

"The Shadow Warrior" won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1980 with its foreign version produced by Coppola and Lucas.

"Rhapsody in August" (1991) with Richard Gere as a second-generation American-Japanese who visits his relatives in Hiroshima and apologises for the U.S. atomic bombing on the city in August 1945 stirred controversy abroad for failing to address Japan's war guilt.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Don't put your faith in stars'

CASTELGANDOLFO, Italy (R) — Pope John Paul II warned Roman Catholics Sunday not to put their faith in horoscopes and magic. The 78-year-old Pope told pilgrims and tourists at his weekly address at his summer residence to plan their lives by looking to God rather than to the stars. "Horoscopes and magic predictions don't do anything. What is needed instead is prayer, real prayer, which should be coupled with leading a life that conforms to God's law," he said. Italians are mad about horoscopes, which are carried daily by nearly every television and radio news bulletin. A popular evening television programme includes a woman dressed as a gypsy reading tarot cards.

Estrada says Philippine health chief resigned due to threats

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Philippines' health chief resigned because of threats from a syndicate that has illegally cornered government purchases of medicine, President Joseph Estrada said Sunday. Estrada said he has ordered an investigation of the syndicate's activities at the department of health. Last week, Estrada accepted the resignation of Health Secretary Felipe Estrella, the first Cabinet member in the new administration to quit. Estrada, who took office June 30, said he would name a replacement this week. Estrella had tried but failed to stop the operations of the syndicate, which has existed since the time of Estrada's predecessor, Fidel Ramos, the president told reporters. "It's been going on, millions have been lost," Estrada said, but declined to give other details, including whether health department officials were involved. The Philippine leader also blamed the syndicate for a shortage of medicine in many rural hospitals. Estrada won by a wide margin in the May 11 elections on a pro-poor platform. He has pledged to make an anti-graft campaign a cornerstone of his six-year term.

S. African deputy president postpones visit to Russia

PRETORIA (AFP) — South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has postponed a visit to Russia set for this month because of the political upheaval in Moscow, a spokesman told AFP Sunday. Mbeki was due in Russia on Sept. 15 and 16 for talks to strengthen relations between the two countries. "The visit has been postponed because of the political situation in Russia," Mbeki's spokesman Ricky Naidoo said. "(Mbeki) thought it was better to postpone the trip until further notice. A new date has not been set. Obviously this will have to be done in consultation with our Russian counterparts," he said. The visit was part of efforts to pick up relations between Moscow and Pretoria, halted when Russia's political transition had required undivided attention, an envoy for President Boris Yeltsin said in June, when the visit was announced.

Black boxes from Swissair crash localised

ZURICH (AFP) — Both "black box" flight recorders from the Swissair flight which crashed off Canada's Atlantic coast last week have been localised about 60 metres under water, Swissair said Sunday. "If the weather and conditions in the sea permit, both boxes should be brought to the surface today," SAir group president Philippe Bruggisser said. He told journalists however that divers at the scene reported poor visibility in the crash area. The two black boxes contain a Flight Data Recorder and a cockpit Voice Recorder which are expected to help investigators determine why Swissair Flight 111 went down, killing all 229 people on board. A submarine using sonar located the signals emitted by the two recorders Saturday. The plane was on its way to Geneva when it plunged into the ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia less than two hours after leaving New York.

Japan's poisoning scare spreads further

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's nationwide poisoning scare spread further Sunday with three people falling sick in apparent copycat cases following arsenic-laced curry murders in July. A 30-year-old policeman fell unconscious after eating a sandwich and fried chicken bought from a convenience store in Shizuoka, central Japan, in what could be another case. But no trace of toxins was immediately detected in the food. In Otsu, near Kyoto in western Japan, a 19-year-old woman was briefly treated in hospital after feeling a strange sensation in the mouth and vomiting when she drank canned tea bought at a convenience store. Her 24-year-old boyfriend also bought the mixed herb tea and tasted something funny. Police detected an agent used in synthetic detergents in the drink and found a pinhole sealed with glue in the bottom of the can, a spokesman said. In Shizuoka, a 30-year-old housewife was also treated in hospital after complaining of a burning sensation after she tasted a bottled drink bought from a supermarket. The bottom of the plastic bottle was also found to have been pierced and sealed, police said. The spate of poisonings started on July 25 when four people died and more than 60 were taken to hospital after eating curry laced with arsenic at a community festival in Wakayama near the western city of Osaka. A dozen poisonings cases have since been reported nationwide. A 58-year-old house painter collapsed and died within hours of drinking a can of cyanide-laced tea bought from a supermarket in Nagano, northwest of Tokyo, last Tuesday. Friday a 25-year-old housewife felt her tongue numb after she sipped orange juice bought from a convenience store in Osaka. Police discovered hypochlorous acid, a substance used in bleach, in the juice.

Thai zoo boasts first female crocodile tamer

BANGKOK (R) — Nineteen-year-old Daungduen Pongpetch seemed to brim with passion as she opened the toothy mouth of Audi and kissed him, to the cheers of onlookers. Despite the applause, the scene was anything but romantic, for Audi is no prince charming, but a three-metre-long crocodile weighing 200 kg in a Thai zoo. His razor sharp teeth could have put a permanent dent in Daungduen during her performance at the zoo in eastern Chonburi province were it not for her prowess with reptiles like Audi. To underscore her taming skills, Daungduen, described by the Sri Racha Tiger Zoo as Thailand's first female crocodile tamer, next put her head into the crocodile's mouth. To make it open its mouth wide, she hit its tail to agitate it. Daungduen, a former drinks vendor, said the danger had attracted her to the job. "I used to sell drinks at the zoo. Each day I watched men performing the show and wished I could do it too. It looked really exciting and challenging," she told Reuters. "Some of them are fiercer than the others. I try to avoid those types of crocodiles. During their mating period it is also dangerous," she said.

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The Turkish potential

TURKISH PRIME MINISTER Mesut Yilmaz's visit to Jordan acquires a special significance in light of the failing peace process and the threat that poses to the stability and security of the Middle East. Three important features of the visit deserve particular notice. First is that the Turkish prime minister intends to visit the Palestinian self-rule areas and Israel for talks centring on the peace process and on ways to reactivate it. Ankara recognises that regional peace and security are organically linked to the settlement of regional conflicts in a fair and balanced manner. Second, Yilmaz is accompanied by 100 businesspeople, something that suggests that his talks with the leaders of the three countries will have an important economic dimension. Turkey is a rich country endowed with natural resources, top among them is water. Turkey is also an advanced industrialised nation with the capacity to manufacture products that the area needs and imports. Third, the Turkish thrust into the region has an obvious security dimension. Ankara clearly seeks to enhance military cooperation with Amman.

Topping the Turkish government's agenda is the issue of terrorism at a time when the republic is still engulfed in a war of attrition with the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). Turkey has long accused Syria of giving sanctuary to the PKK leadership. Jordan would prefer that the cool relations between Turkey and Syria not escalate into a full-blown conflict. Escalation of existing tensions would prove quite damaging to the fragile security of the region. Rather, Jordan can play a pivotal role in defusing the Turkish-Syrian conflict and improving relations between the two countries, especially over the Kurdish separatist movement or on the issue of water from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

Improvement and consolidation of Jordanian-Turkish relations on political, economic and security fronts is thus a welcome development. There is much that can still be done to strengthen these relations. Turkey is a large powerful country in every sense of the word.

Its increased military ties with Israel are bound to be viewed with suspicion as long as a comprehensive peace alludes us. Many Arabs think Ankara's alliance with Tel Aviv makes the Jewish state less pressed to achieve peace with the Palestinians and the Syrians. But Turkey's military and security relations with Israel can also provide Ankara with effective leverage that could be invested to push for an enlightened regional peace and security.

Turkey is on the record as opposing Israeli settlement policies and the Jewish state's declared position on Jerusalem. It also has historical ties with the Arabs dating back more than five centuries. It is therefore hoped that Turkey's policies for the region will not only be based on immediate interests but on a long-term historical vision of a near eastern region at peace with itself.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh charged that mismanagement and bad leadership in Russia was the basic reason for the deterioration of the economic situation. He said Russia is considered one of the wealthiest countries in the world, as number one exporter of gold and oil. The amount of land suitable for agriculture is half the size of all agricultural land in the world, said Faneh. Russia is now in an economic vacuum. It is neither totally capitalist nor socialist. In the nineties the government's role diminished, but unfortunately the private sector did not replace it, the mafia took over and caused chaos in the country, said the writer. As a result, poverty and unemployment as well as corruption spread, he added. Faneh speculated that a civil war may occur before any improvements.

Al Dustour called on the American envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross to lay all responsibility for the deadlock in the Middle East peace process squarely on Israel. The paper lashed out at the hard-line Israeli government for this stalemate. Israel is undermining all efforts exerted by the United States, sponsoring the peace process. The paper urged Ross to make his upcoming visit to the region fruitful unlike other failed missions, as when the American envoy was unable to force Israel to accept the 13.1 per cent troop redeployment initiative, which the Palestinians accepted. The paper, however, was pessimistic about the outcome of the visit and said it would be yet another in a string of failed visits.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

A market that behaves as if it isn't one

FINALLY THE good news is emerging from the rubble of dismay, and a reasonable level of optimism, something that has been forlorn for a while, is at last beginning to resurface. Best of all, the prophecy that the economy is heading towards a recovery is coming closer to fulfilment. And while the reason(s) for the rise in economic activity may still be in the folds of those mysterious numbers which we have grown to trust and distrust, some answers and lessons may be dug out for the present. Surely we should be able to discern why a market may behave as if it isn't, or explain why an elephant barked.

The GDP is expected to grow at rates close to 3 per cent (most likely 2.7 per cent) in real terms which is a concrete improvement over the 2.2 per cent growth of last year and the 0.8 per cent of 1996. The leading indicator is of course the construction sector which improved by 0.4 per cent over the rate of last year for the same period, thus signalling that investor pessimism is winding down and possibly that demand has caught up with supply. Industry grew by 2.2 per cent (in 1996 the industrial sector growth rate was a negative six per cent) due to considerable growth in the cement and potash production (six per cent), and an increase in the manufacturing industries of 1.4 percentage points higher than that of the same period last year. Also in the tourism sector, tourists from neighbouring Arab countries picked up

the slack caused by recent regional instabilities and the laudable promotional efforts of the Ministry of Tourism, which were undertaken in spite of a tight budget and a difficult fiscal year, have had a tremendous impact on reversing a downward trend.

Inflation, according to the Department of Statistics, is expected to be well within the acceptable range of less than five per cent. If the price of bread is lowered the inflation rate may drop considerably, especially in the food basket, which would increase the real income of Jordanians and help boost domestic spending. Given the presently even-tempered expectations of the market toward the peace process, this lack of optimism may act to the advantage of the Jordanian market. In the past, high hopes and excessive optimism have led to dismay, plummeting expectations and short business cycles witnessed as immediate market fluctuations (see for example the sinusoidal pattern of net foreign direct investments in Jordan over the past four years). The current mature view of Israel and its ruling party, particularly in issues related to trade, will help expectations in Jordan become more rational. This should help the Jordanian business cycle, the cyclical-like pattern of rise and fall in economic activity, become more stable and prolonged.

But what advice can be noted to speed the recovery at this stage (there is, of course, always the slight chance that the numbers may not be true which would render

any hodgepodge of prescriptions utterly redundant and outright embarrassing) and how can one resurrect the market? One may argue, alas correctly, that the market system in Jordan does not behave as a market. Such an assertion will not be far from the truth because market distortions causing market failure are alive and rampant. In other words, the economic reform must continue until both macro and micro economic aspects of the market are reformed. Failures due to: the large government size and its side effect, extreme bureaucracy; monopolistic practices and the existence of high concentration in the vital sectors; asymmetric information, such as the ignorance of the buyer of production defects or outright cheating and the lack of information in almost every market; and the under-regulated negative externalities, arising from production or consumption should be abolished. In addition, the globalisation game, when played with large neighbouring economies, should be approached with extreme caution. Just as the benefits may be large relative to the size of an economy as small as ours, so are the losses.

Furthermore, the information flow must be enhanced and become available to all, because the availability of information reduces the possibility of irrational expectations, reduces market runs, and brings prices closer to market prices. The alternative is vulnerability and non-market behaviour. So let's not wait too long.

All war criminals should be arrested

By Norman Cigar and Paul R. Williams

THE RECENT press reports that NATO has officially abandoned its efforts to arrest Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for war crimes they committed against the Muslims in Bosnia, cannot but hearten not only these two individuals, but all other current and would-be war criminals around the world. The admission they are not being sought actively comes at a particularly sensitive time, just before the September elections in Bosnia, and will bolster hard-liners in all of Bosnia's communities by suggesting to them that they can stonewall key tenets of the 1995 Dayton Accords and get away with it.

Do NATO forces know where Karadzic and Mladic are? If NATO forces monitor their movements, they should. If NATO does not monitor their movements, why doesn't it? Their arrest is feasible. U.S. military leaders have long insisted on the need for "overwhelming force" for any operation. That condition exists. If, for example, Karadzic's whereabouts are known, NATO armour and air, at little

risk to itself, could easily surround his isolated hideout in Pale and force his surrender. It is unlikely that any of Karadzic's bodyguards would fight and die to save him if faced by SFOR's overwhelming force. After all, they are in it only for the money.

The Bosnian Serb leaders now in power are not likely to jeopardise their positions or the gains made at Dayton by confronting NATO. They will continue to cooperate with SFOR insofar as it is in their interest to do so, as has been true up to now, no more, no less.

Mladic and his key officers are apparently now permanently in Belgrade, where he has been seen before in public. Yugoslavia's President Slobodan Milosevic, as a signatory to the Dayton Accords, is committed to co-operating with the Tribunal. That means handing over indicted war criminals such as Mladic when they enter Yugoslavia. The West recently successfully pressured Croatia into handing over major Bosnian Croat figures indicted by the Hague. It makes sense to develop a similar strategy toward Milosevic to force him to hand Mladic over, rather than sweeping the past under the rug. Bringing such high-visibility

figures as Karadzic and Mladic to justice is as important as ever. First, their trial would delegitimise the concept of genocide and show that the world does not consider terrorising innocent civilians an acceptable policy. Second, this would also show that its perpetrators will pay a price for such crimes as Srebrenica and Sarajevo and discourage copycat genocide. Third, this will defuse calls for individual revenge. Finally, bringing Karadzic and Mladic to justice will place primary responsibility where it belongs — on those individual leaders — and remove the burden of this crime from the entire Serb nation.

Ultimately, this is not only a moral issue, but also good Realpolitik. Without the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic, peace, reconciliation, and stability in Bosnia — far from assured in any event — will be made that much more remote.

Dr. Norman Cigar is a Senior Associate with the Public International Law and Policy Group, Washington, DC.

Paul R. Williams is Professor of International Law at the American University, Washington, DC.

A long war is looming

After the U.S. strikes on Afghanistan it is clear that 'baddies' don't respond as they do in video games, as John Sweeney reports

THEY HAD just made it through the Khyber Pass, crossing into Afghanistan, when the black turbans of the Taliban came into view. Everyone was ordered off the bus, while the "soldier-monks," swathed in gumbells and wielding Kalashnikovs, searched the passengers for guns, gold and anything "un-Islamic."

She was 24, hiding her femininity from head to toe, so completely that even her eyes were shrouded by the thick gauze of the "shuttlecock burka". But she had made a terrible mistake. Her fingernails were still visible, coated with red varnish.

The Taleb, a thick-set man with the trademark fungoid beard, grabbed her while her husband, helpless to defend her, looked on aghast, his hands trembling. The other passengers stared, dumbstruck, as the Taleb took out a steel nail-cutter and snapped off a fingernail at the root so her hand was painted red, not with varnish but with blood.

The eyewitness to the Taleb's manure was "Shazia," an intelligent and beautiful Afghan woman whose dreams of becoming a doctor can never be realised under a regime where women must spend their lives inside the four walls of their home, as chanel to their men. Shazia listed some of the things that Taleban forbid: "No photographs, not even of children. No education for girls. No pictures. No nail polish. No high heels. No make-up. No earrings. No rings on fingers. No perfume."

What about money?

"Why have money if you cannot leave home, even to go to the market? Nothing. Nothing. Nothing."

Shazia hates the "soldier-monks," so her condemnation of the American missile attack — the wits call it their policy of "destructive engagement" — is all the more striking.

"It was really stupid for the Americans to attack Afghanistan," she said. "They have boosted the image of the Taleban."

"Stupid" is the word one hears again and again from people who know Afghanistan when talking about the U.S. attack. A British aid worker based in Kabul reiterated it last week: "The attack came as a big surprise because I never thought the

Americans could do something so stupid," Farsal Qasi, the chief reporter of the Khyber Mail — perhaps the most glamorous newspaper title in the English-speaking world — shook his head in despair as an unseen imam bellowed "Pray for the destruction of the West" from a mosque in Peshawar, capital of the North-West Frontier Province.

The attack was stupid because it makes life much harder for liberal Muslims. A week ago no one had heard of Osama Ben Laden. Now someone in the bazaar has two posters of him for sale. The fundamentalists have never done well in Pakistan. They got eight per cent of the vote at the last election. Thanks to the Americans, they will become even more popular.

But it was an Afghan living in exile from the Taleban in Peshawar who summed it up. The attack shows that the Americans do not understand the way Afghanistan works. One Arab who lives there told me: "All the Americans have to do is give me just one cruise missile, and I would give them the skin from the head and body of Osama Ben Laden."

None of these critics of U.S. policy are friends of the Taleban, its one-eyed leader, Mullah Omar, or their guest, Ben Laden, currently said to be holed up in a "Batcave" tricked out with satellites, fridge-freezers and computers all linked to the Internet, somewhere in the hills above Kandahar.

The Taleban is not restricted to the mountains of Afghanistan. It straddles the Pakistani border into Peshawar. Even here its writ runs. Shazia has been threatened with a knife by a Taleban in Peshawar for talking about women's rights. She showed him her own knife and said: "I've got one, too." The threat is enough for her to ask me not to use her real name.

The U.S. attack on the Afghan bases is full of ironies. The U.S. military knew where the buses were because they helped build them to withstand Soviet attack. The "terrorists" use U.S. Marine training manuals, translated into Arabic, on how to break down weapons and make broby traps. These were supplied to the Islamist fighters when

they were anti-Soviet goodies back in the 1980s, not 1990s baddies.

And zapping Ben Laden was never going to be a Gulf war-style video game. Peter Jovanel, a British cameraman and one of a handful of Westerners to meet Ben Laden, describes preparations for his meeting. "We were called at our hotel and left in the middle of the night. We were blindfolded and the car stopped on a mountain road. There we were body-searched and a metal detector was passed over us, three times. We were told to confess if we had any tracking devices."

"When we met him I was not allowed to use my own camera. They had their own one, which worked. Ben Laden was surrounded by Arabs, fighters who had fought with him during the jihad against the Russians. He had no English but he was confident and relaxed. They're not stupid. They know all about modern technology and they know what they're doing."

The same cannot be said for the Americans who meet in this part of the world — who filter, advise and enforce their country's foreign policy. One, a clean-faced, preppy dresser in tie and jacket, came across as an Afghan edition of Alden Pyle. Graham Greene's original Quiet American — the naive CIA evangelist of Vietnam.

As with Pyle, the earnest righteousness was written on his youthful face. But subtlety? An understanding of the Afghan mentality? Knowledge of how Afghanistan works? None of those.

When a few colleagues ribbed the Quiet American about his country's policy of "destructive engagement" with the terrorist threat, he shrugged. "It's going to be a long war," he said.

His words were echoed a few days later when we met a Taleb, a teacher ramming home the message of Islamic purity to a seminary — or madrasah — full of Muslim boys, rocking on their haunches and learning the Koran by rote. The Taleb, Syedul Arifeen, said: "It's going to be a long war."

The two sides are squared up for the fight. The grounds for an ideological conflict are already sewn, like so many dragon's teeth. On the Quiet

American's side are the four areas of concern the United States had raised with the Taleban before the bombs fell on Ben Laden's camps. First was terrorism. Second, narcotics — Afghanistan is catching up with Burma as the world's biggest exporter of heroin. Third, human rights, and in particular the lack of education for girls. Fourth for the Taleban to create a broad-based government.

On all four grounds, there had been no movement. So when the FBI told Clinton and the Joint Chiefs that it was pretty sure that it was Ben Laden who had been behind the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Africa, the Americans sent him and his friends a message they would understand.

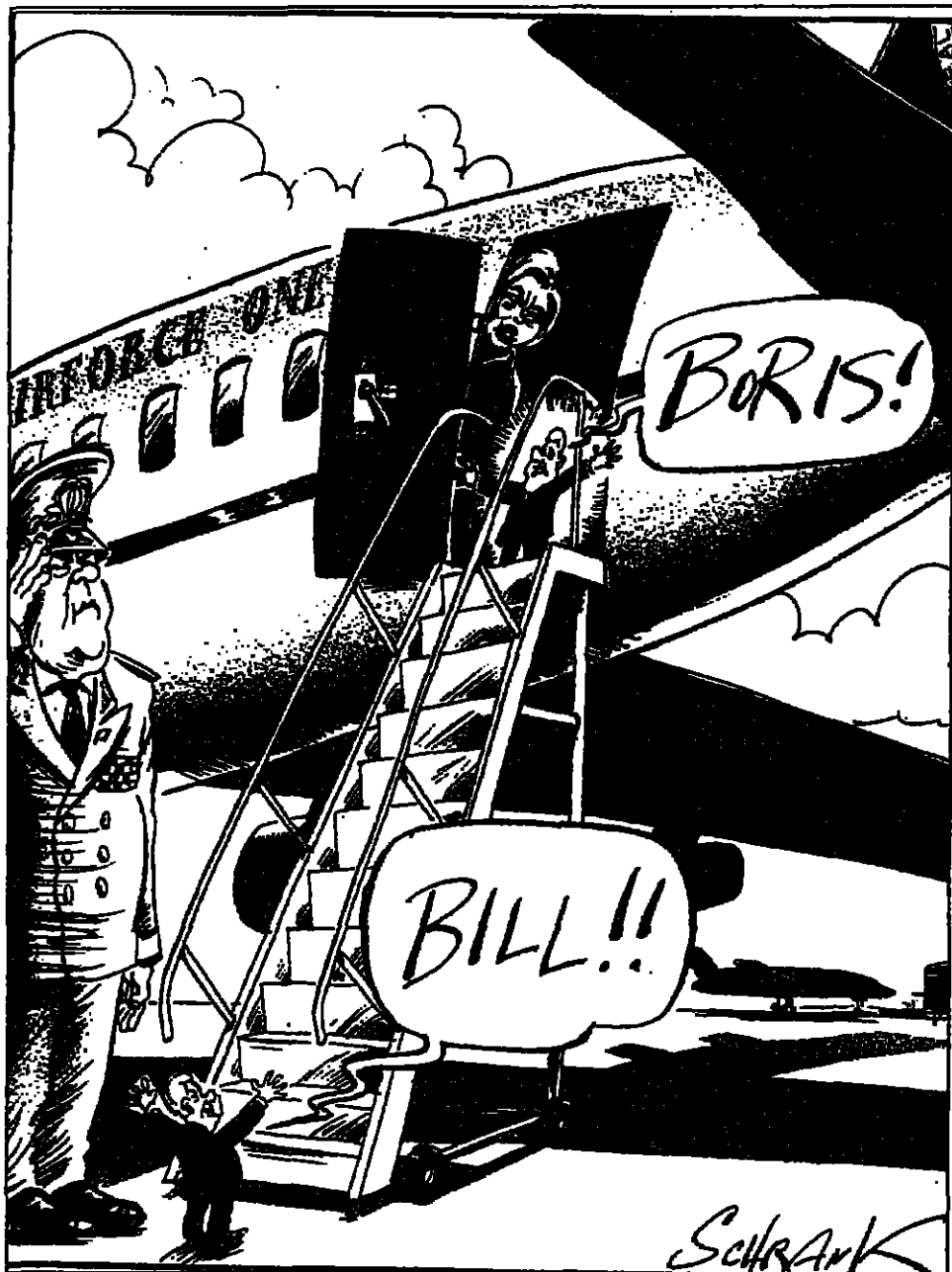
But the Taleban, and their friends across the Arab World, do not speak the same language as the U.S. Instead of the intended message of the U.S. missiles, they see it as the act of a corrupt and depraved president being seduced by a Jewish woman, symbol of Israel's seduction of America.

That Monica Lewinsky is Jewish may seem neither here nor there in Britain or America. In Pakistan and Afghanistan it is the clincher for a Zionist plot. They see the corrupt and depraved culture of the West seeking to destroy Islam. But Islam, they promise, will fight back. "Pray for the destruction of the West," cried the imam of Peshawar's most fiery mosque last Friday. "Pray for the West to be divided into pieces so that it can be attacked, just as the West has done to Islam."

Not far from the mosque in Peshawar where the imam was calling for the fall of the West lies the Christian graveyard, a legacy of the Great Game as it was played in the time of the British Raj. The gravestones are cracked with age, and weeds and young trees up through the slabs, mocking the heartfelt farewells. A cross overgrown by ferns, bears the inscription: "Capt Duncan Kyd Presgrave, October 21, 1862. Erected by his brother officers."

One can't help feeling that there will be more crosses and crescents in graveyards, testimony to lives cut short, as the long war is fought out in the years to come.

— The Observer



Regent sees need for building new economic model in Arab World

By Samir Ghawi

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday said there is a need for building a new economic model in the Arab World.

Addressing the opening of the 22nd session of the Arab Central Bank Governors' meeting, the Regent stressed that such a model should be based on the respect of the individual, his/her values and worth.

Acknowledging that central banks cannot possibly be expected to bear the burden of economic reforms through monetary measures and policies alone, the Crown Prince saw these mechanisms as insufficient in themselves to bring about the aspired growth and development.

"Macro-economic models put together cannot separate between what goes on in the monetary market and what takes place in labour and production markets," he said noting that monetary policy is generally conceived to be the employment of financial tools such as interest rates, exchange rates and reserve requirements in addition to other elements for controlling money supply.

The Crown Prince did not negate the importance of these financial tools and the consequences that may ensue from any fault or defect in steering financial matters, but, he told the central bank governors "my understanding of your role in spurring growth and applying reforms is more comprehensive and covers responsibilities of overall growth."

The Crown Prince questioned why Arab countries

do not witness more investments in joint ventures and why there is a lack of sufficient mechanisms to ease the flow of capital and facilitate funding of joint development projects.

"It is our duty to answer the Arab people why the financing of Arab trade has not risen to constitute at least 20 per cent of our total foreign trade," he said.

The Regent added that central banks face challenges in dealing with instabilities in international markets but, still, he indicated that such global turbulences do not constitute priorities as far as the Arab citizen is concerned.

"As an Arab citizen not proficient in the monetary field, I would like to hear from you what could possibly give me some satisfaction that Arab capitals will continue to provide jobs, build projects and be instrumental in combating unemployment, poverty and backwardness," he told the governors of central banks.

The Crown Prince highlighted the link between economic reform and human rights by telling the audience: "It is high time to declare that divorcing community values from economic achievements has gone forever."

"It is illogical for us to speak of comprehensive economic reform when we opt to ignore human rights in its widest concept. After all, the human being remains the aim of growth," he emphasised.

Stressing the need to bring about a productive community, the Crown Prince said: "What should be distributed among the people is really that which they themselves

should produce." He pointed out that public finance is but a means for redistribution in favour of the needy and poor in addition to bolstering the productive environment of the community in a fair and transparent manner. He said poverty threatens more than 40 per cent of the total population of the Arab World.

He defended every taxpayer by saying that a citizen who has contributed towards building a community has every right to enquire about the ways and means that the taxes he/she pays are handled and how the taxes are disbursed.

"Such a relation constitutes the basic test for the ability of communities in our Arab World to move from welfare societies to productive ones; from an import economy to a one

capable of competing and exporting and from dependency on holding public office to active contribution in cost-effective economic enterprises.

The second basic aspect for advancing the Arab economies, the Crown Prince pointed out, is the definition of the value of the human being and his/her position in the community.

He called for initiating a

merit procedure whereby a person's contribution is accurately measured and properly determined. "People who are ruled by the scales of justice are those who are more capable and better equipped to work and build," he asserted.

Referring to inter-Arab trade, which remains limited and below expectations, the Regent said "we must admit that we contradict our-

selves."

He explained that while it is true that in previous decades the decline in inter-Arab trade was attributed to weakness in infrastructure and production cost vari-eties, nowadays the Arab World grumbles at the absence of political will for activating trade channels.

"In this respect, we cannot, speak of economic and trade obstacles in isolation

from existing disparities in certain basic concepts such as democracy, consultation, human rights, civil society, objectivity, openness, fear from other world cultures, contemporaneity, originality, and other concepts that create duality among the Arab states on the one hand, and within each individual Arab community on the other hand," the Prince said.

from existing disparities in certain basic concepts such as democracy, consultation, human rights, civil society, objectivity, openness, fear from other world cultures, contemporaneity, originality, and other concepts that create duality among the Arab states on the one hand, and within each individual Arab community on the other hand," the Prince said.



Crown Prince Hassan (centre) presides over the opening session of the meeting of Arab Central Bank Governors. Below, governors and audience listen to the Regent's address



REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 6/09/98 18:17

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.7343	0.8878	1.4238	133.50	1.5215	1713.18	1.9570	5.8164
DE Mark	0.5785	-	0.3448	0.5207	76.96	0.8770	967.52	1.1283
GB Sterling	1.6725	2.9010	-	2.3810	223.29	2.5447	2865.24	3.2731
CH Franc	0.7024	1.2178	0.4197	-	93.75	1.0684	1202.97	137.42
JP Yen	0.0078	1.2998	0.4478	1.0680	-	1.1393	12.83	148.54
CA Dollar	0.6672	1.2916	0.4226	1.0685	1.14	-	1270.80	1.4661
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0122	0.3488	0.0831	1284.85	0.8880	-	11.42
FR Franc	0.1719	0.2881	0.1027	24.4714	22.93	0.2615	33.64	33.6400

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LEP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7804	0.3770	3.6400	0.3047	3.6725	1617.00	3.4010
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2887	0.5317	5.1340	0.4298	5.1798	2139.83	4.7989
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	404.48	0.9068
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9480	-	9.66	0.8062	9.74	4023.87	9.0212
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0837	1.01	416.78	0.9343
Kuwait Dinar	3.2819	2.3289	12.3085	1.2373	11.95	-	12.05	4978.67	0.9343
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1931	1.0212	1.0207	0.9912	0.0830	-	413.07	0.9281
Lebanese/1000	0.68	0.4874	2.4722	0.2485	2.3985	0.2009	2.4209	-	2.2419
Egyptian	0.2940	0.2085	1.1027	0.1108	1.0703	0.0896	1.0798	446.05	-

Energy

Oil	Last	Review
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	14.58	14.57
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	12.37	11.95
U.L. Gas	131.00	131.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.18943	0.37972	35.61	-
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47237	0.16281	36.365	-
"KW Dinar	3.2819	5.89476	1.96232	438.212	-
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.80193	1.58604	3.77788	354.233
CY Pound	1.9504	3.3825	1.1558	2.7768	280.378

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	288.4	287.1
Silver (oz's)	5.01	5.04
Platinum (oz's)	365.2	367.2
AL (3 Months)	1405	1409
CU (3 Months)	1689	1674
Zinc (3 Months)	1046	1049
Lead (3 Months)	840	844
NI (3 Months)	4330	4350

Libor Fixing

Period	1	3	6	12
Currency	Month	Month	Month	Year
USD	5.8250	5.8938	5.9825	6.0000
GBP	7.5703	7.8888	7.8156	7.7580
JPY	0.6289	0.6211	0.6133	0.6133
DEM	3.4688	3.5000	3.5820	3.6328
FRF	1.8938	1.8663	1.7344	1.7930
CHF	3.6000	3.5827	3.6035	3.6599
ITL	5.2300	5.0830	4.8100	-

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Chg
New York	DOW JONES	7640.25	-41.97	-0.55	7790.78	7498.61	7682.22
New York	S&P 500	973.88	-8.37	-0.85	991.41	968.81	982.26
London	FT-SE 100	5167	48.3	0.94	5194.5	5113.5	5118.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	14042.91	-218.33	-1.53	14185.8	14042.9	14281.2
Paris	CAC 40	3690.75	44.29	1.21	3726.1	3647.89	3646.46
Frankfurt	DAX	4820.25	8.07	0.17	4945.47	4765.33	4812.18

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	113.42	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	2010	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	234	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	100	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	24.6	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	125	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	415	Spot

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1814	1.1873
DE Mark	0.4077	0.4097
CH Franc	0.4963	0.4988
FR Franc	0.1219	0.1225
JP Yen	0.0298	0.0304
NL Guilder	0.3813	0.3831
IT Lira	0.4128	0.4148

THE AL-HUSSEIN SOCIETY FOR THE HABILITATION/REHABILITATION OF THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

Wishes to express its gratitude to the MARRIOTT HOTEL

for sponsoring and organising the 13th Annual Charity Train Ride to Dabha Castle last Thursday, the 3rd of September. Without the enthusiasm and complete commitment of the Marriott staff from top to bottom, the "desert soiree" would not have been such a huge success.

From the Board and the students of the Al-Hussein Society, a heart-felt thanks to all of you.

We also extend our most sincere thanks to JETT bus company for so generously offering the transportation to the railway station as well as the return trip from Dabha and to the numerous other sponsors of the event.

Yemen to lift subsidies on flour and wheat

SANAA (R) — Yemen plans to lift subsidies on flour and wheat in the last price rises under reforms prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. President Ali Abdullah Saleh has said.

"The last dose will only be in the lifting of subsidies on wheat and flour," Saleh told a conference on financial and administrative reforms in Sanaa.

"Despite the hardships and the sufferings by our masses and the damage incurred to the national economy from the last price rises, we hope it will be the last dose," he said without

indicating when the subsidies would be lifted.

Yemen, one of Arab World's most impoverished countries, started implementing the economic reform programme in 1995 and has since been plagued by waves of popular protests. In June, Yemen was rocked by almost two weeks of protests and violence when the government raised prices of some foodstuffs and petrol by up to 40 per cent as part of the reforms.

Yemen's Central Bank Governor Ahmad Al Samawi said earlier that economic reforms were beginning to bear fruit.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Depict distinctly
- Cousin
- 10 Fete
- 14 Askew
- 15 Also-ran
- 16 Algerian port
- 17 Contented
- 18 In plain view
- 19 Part of a three-piece suit
- 20 Outgoing one
- 22 Discontinue
- 23 Base trial
- 24 Get an earful
- 26 Way in: abbr.
- 27 Thrower
- 31 Fine-grained mineral
- 35 Mischievous
- 37 Comic-strip
- 38 Homeric epic
- 40 Little yelp
- 42 Comic Kovacs
- 43 Cowboy's garage?
- 45 Pause fillers
- 47 Brief time periods
- 48 More strict
- 50 Make a choice
- 52 Abominable
- 53 Strategic position
- 58 Fusses
- 61 Opening offers
- 63 Tel. Jafa
- 64 Cubic meter
- 65 Legal claim
- 66 Amusement park thrill
- 67 Balgrade residents
- 68 In (in actual being)
- 69 Fragrance
- 70 Rendezvous
- 71 Understands

DOWN

- 1 Roof's overhang
- 2 Believes positively
- 3 Mediterranean island
- 4 Many-headed monster
- 5 Lubjana resident
- 6 In secret
- 7 Computer operator
- 8 Ship bunks
- 9 Craftsmanship
- 10 State leaders
- 11 Square measure
- 12 Highland maiden
- 13 Pot starter
- 14 Africa cheer
- 22 "Alfie" star
- 25 Chicago transp.
- 28 Departed
- 29 Classic saga
- 30 Deli breads
- 31 Muscle spasms
- 32 Plenty
- 33 Bologna currency
- 34 Battered
- 41 Old Tr. agent
- 44 Africa
- 46 M.
- 49 M.
- 55 Get out of bed
- 56 V-tation
- 57 Foul serfs

Peanuts



Andy Capp

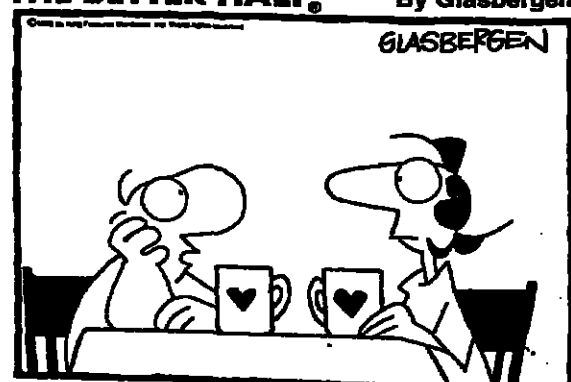


Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

One more and you win \$100,000 OPEN TOURNAMENT

PURUS

CUDIL

VIRFED

THINGK

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: FISHY WHISK WIDEST NOZZLE

Answer: Kids can turn a park into this — A SLIDE SHOW

U.S. OPEN

Sampras-Agassi match nears while Rafter readies for Goran

NEW YORK (AFP) — World number one Pete Sampras and former number one Andre Agassi moved nearer to a U.S. Open quarter-final showdown while a foe that reigning champion Pat Rafter fears is already upon him.

Open quarter-final showdown while a foe that reigning champion Pat Rafter fears is already upon him.

Sampras beat 71st-rated Swede Mikael Tillstrom 6-2, 6-3, 6-1, and 1994 U.S. Open winner Agassi ousted 50th-ranked Italian Davide Sanguinetti 6-2, 6-3, 6-0, in third-round matches Saturday at the \$14 million event.

"It was a little up and down for both of us," Sampras said of his 78-minute match. "It was a little careless at times but I got in the work I wanted to get done. When you win 2, 3 and 1, it's a pretty good day."

Sampras has three of the six victories he needs to reach the U.S. Open final, where he could match Roy Emerson's career record of 12 Grand Slam singles titles.

But first he might have to get past Agassi. The U.S. stars will meet in the quarter-finals if Sampras beats 60th-ranked Russian 18-year-old Marat Safin and Agassi defeats ninth seed Karol Kucera of Slovakia.

"I'm not worried about it being too soon in the tournament," Agassi said. "That's not too soon to start playing good tennis. I'm excited. If we do get there, I look forward to it being a night to remember."

Australian third seed Rafter beat 188th-rated South African qualifier David Nainkin 6-1, 6-1, 6-1, and next faces Goran Ivanisevic, who snapped a five-match losing streak to Dutchman Paul Haarhuis 7-6 (7/5), 6-3, 6-4.

"I picked Goran four weeks ago as a danger man for this tournament," Rafter said of the 14th-seeded Wimbledon runner-up from Croatia. "We all know how well he serves. He is going to be very dangerous."

"It's important when you play Goran to hang tough all the time. You never know with Goran. He can make mistakes. You have to hang in there. He's going to have to beat me. I'm not going to lose it."

Rafter won in 66 minutes and has not lost a set since dropping his first two of the tournament to Morocco's Hicham Arazi, matching the number of sets he lost in seven matches here last year.

Ivanisevic served 21 aces, the last 117 mph on match point, and has dropped only one set in three matches.

"I'm hitting the ball great. I'm playing good tennis. Anything is possible," Ivanisevic said. "I'm looking forward to playing Patrick. It's going to be a great match. If I play great tennis he has to beat me."

Ivanisevic would enjoy seeing a Sampras-Agassi quarter-final showdown.

"Pete is always looking good. Even when he doesn't look good, he looks good," he said. "Andre is another great player. He's hitting the ball well. If they meet in the quarters it's going to be a hell of a

match."

Britain's Greg Rusedski, last year's U.S. Open runner-up, was ousted 4-6, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, by 21st-ranked Dutchman Jan Siemerink, who won on his fourth match point after three hours and 22 minutes with a 123-mph ace, his fastest of 10 in the match.

It was 13th seed Rusedski's third consecutive five-set match. He played nine hours and 20 minutes in 15 sets over five days before faltering on the seventh match point against him in the tournament.

Siemerink next faces 12th-seeded Swede Jonas Bjorkman, who lost to Rusedski in the 1997 semi-final here. Siemerink is 1-4 against Bjorkman but lost their most recent meeting in July at Wimbledon in five sets.

"I'm going to be tough to beat," Rusedski said. "I'm hitting the ball better, getting more confidence. I feel as good as I did in '97."

The women's round of 16 was set with only two ousted seeds, Belgian 14th Dominique Van Roost and Japanese 16th Ai Sugiyama. The 14 seeds into the fourth round matched a U.S. Open record set in 1986 and 1987.

"It's weird," second seed Lindsay Davenport said. "The other Grand Slams, there have been a lot of upsets. A lot of girls have come through unseeded. Maybe some players that used to be floaters are now seeded."

Fourth-seeded French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario will face Russian 15th seed Anna Kournikova, a 17-year-old who has won all three prior matches against the Spaniard, two this year.

Spanish seventh seed Conchita Martinez plays 13th seed Amanda Coetzer and has a 12-1 record against the South African.

America's top players will face French challenges when Davenport meets 10th-seeded Nathalie Tauziat and fifth seed Venus Williams takes on 12th seed Mary Pierce. Davenport is 8-2 against Tauziat. Pierce won her only match with Williams last month in San Diego when the American retired.

Williams advanced when Latvia's Larisa Neiland retired with back pain trailing 5-0 with only six points after 13 minutes. "It's too bad. I was hoping I would have a tough match," Williams said.

World number one Martina Hingis can set up a quarter-final showdown with former number one Monica Seles and five-time U.S. Open winner Steffi Graf can book a date with



Number fifteen seeded Anna Kournikova of Russia watches a serve to Silvia Farina of Italy Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, N.Y. (AFP photo)



Eight seeded Andre Agassi of the U.S. stretches for a return to Davide Sanguinetti of Italy Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, N.Y. Agassi won 6-2, 6-3, 6-0 (AFP photo)

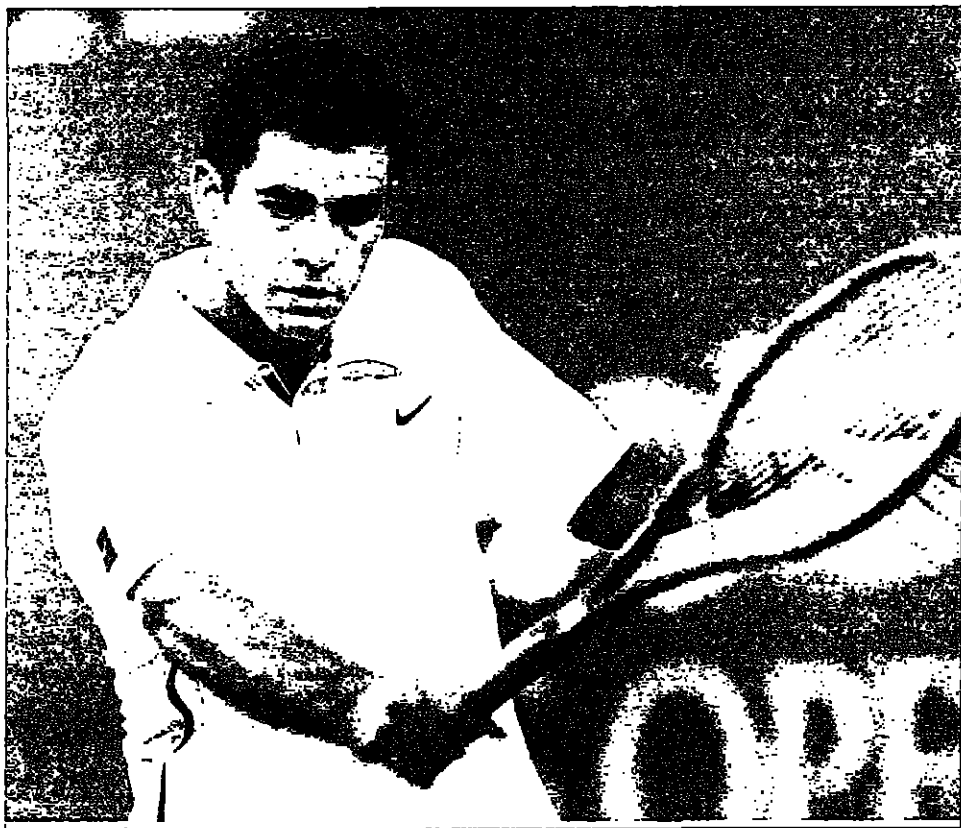
Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna on Sunday.

Swiss teen Hingis plays 64th-rated Nathalie Dechy of France while sixth seed Seles must get past U.S.

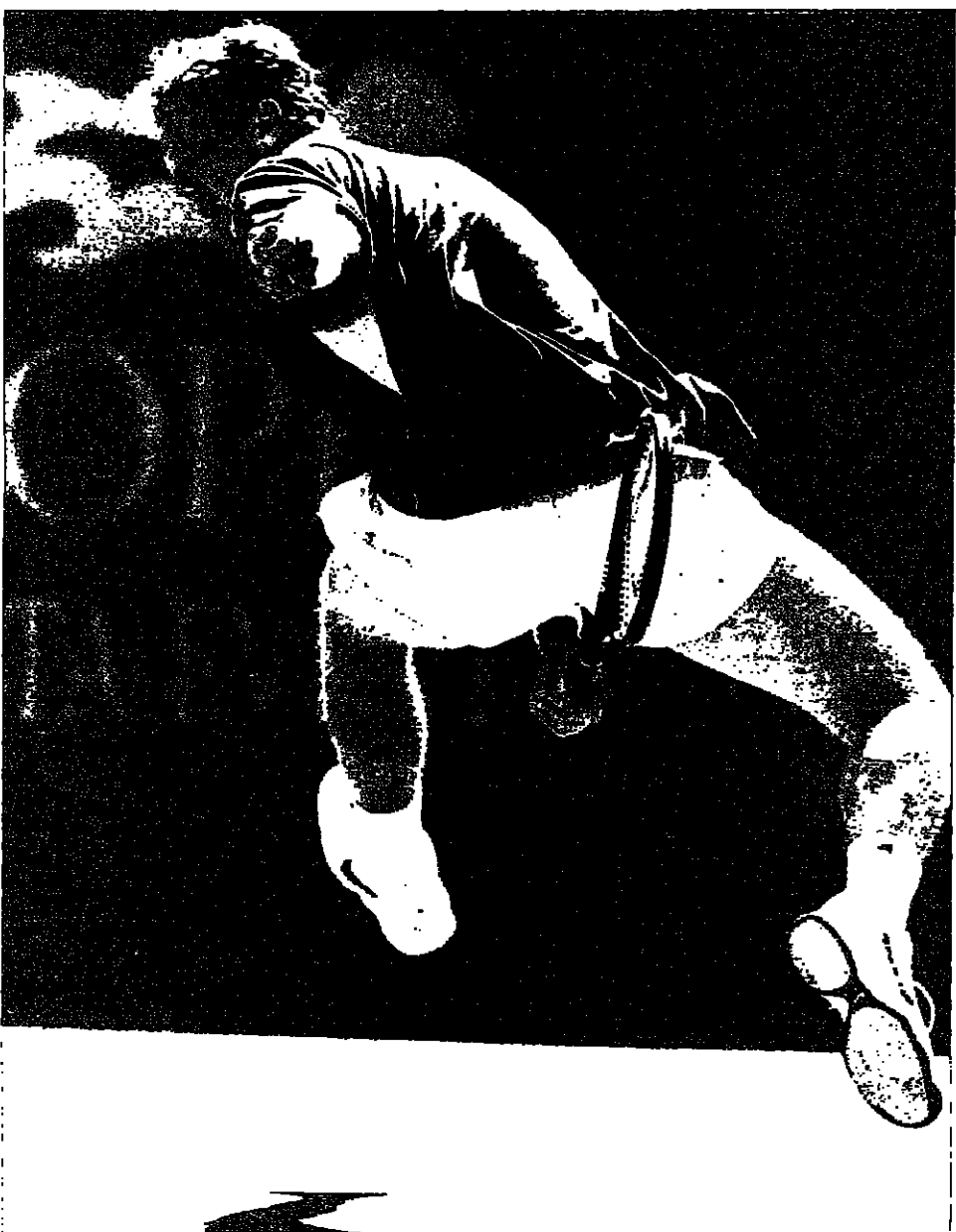
compatriot Kimberly Po.

Eighth seed Graf faces Swiss 11th seed Patty Schnyder. Novotna faces ninth-seeded Romanian Irina Spirlea.

Seles is 3-0 against Po and Novotna 2-0 against Spirlea. The others will meet for the first time on the court.



Number one seed Pete Sampras of the U.S. hits a backhand return to Mikael Tillstrom of Sweden Saturday at U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, N.Y. Sampras won in straight sets 6-2, 6-3, 6-1 (AFP photo)



Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden hits the ball between his legs to Fabrice Santoro of France Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, N.Y. (AFP photo)

U.S. Open Glance

NEW YORK (AP) — Highlights of Saturday's play in the \$14 million U.S. Open tennis championships:

Weather: Sunny and breezy with a high of 80 and low humidity.

Attendance: Day: 24,928. Night: 21,516. Total: 46,444.

Results: Men: No. 1 Pete Sampras, No. 3 Patrick Rafter, No. 8 Andre Agassi, No. 9 Karol Kucera, No. 12 Jonas Bjorkman, No. 14 Goran Ivanisevic, Jan Siemerink and Marat Safin advanced to the fourth round. Sixth-seeded Greg Rusedski was eliminated by Siemerink. Women: No. 2 Lindsay Davenport, No. 4 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, No. 5 Venus Williams, No. 7 Conchita Martinez, No. 10 Nathalie Tauziat, No. 12

Mary Pierce, No. 13 Amanda Coetzer and No. 15 Anna Kournikova all won their third-round matches.

State of the Day: Patrick Rafter needed only one hour, six minutes to beat David Nainkin, 6-1, 6-1, 6-1. It was the shortest men's singles match of the tournament.

Quote of the Day: "He's very unpredictable. Even he'll admit it. When he's on, he's on. We're good mates. He's open and he likes to have fun. We'll do our business and when we get off, we'll be good mates." — Patrick Rafter, on his fourth-round opponent, Goran Ivanisevic.

Japanese and snafus dominate Sydney marathon

SYDNEY (AP) — Japanese runners dominated the men's and women's divisions of Sunday's Sydney marathon, but there was major embarrassment for the host city of the 2000 Olympics.

Kenichi Takahashi won the men's title in two hours, 15 minutes and 51 seconds, followed by compatriots Katsuhiko Hanada and Honda Takehara, as Japanese runners filled the first 10 placings.

Yukari Komatsu, 24, was the first woman across the finish in 2:29:09 followed by Shiki Terasaki and Eri Matsubara. Japan claimed the top five places in the women's field.

Masako Chiba, who won a bronze medal over 10,000 meters at last year's world championships, was fourth in her debut at the full marathon distance, clocking 2:37:44.

The race started an hour late because the Sydney Roads and Traffic Authority had failed to close two essential roads to traffic.

While the event was not run by the Sydney Olympic organizers (SOCOG), a leading athletics official said the prob-

lems could only reflect poorly on Sydney's Olympic buildup.

The 900 entrants were warmed up and ready for the 0700 start at North Sydney when police informed organizers of the inadequate road closures. The race started at 0803 local time.

Athletics New South Wales president Ralph Doubell described it as a major international embarrassment for Sydney.

"Especially when you have about 400 overseas runners, including the Japanese Olympic Games squad competing," said Doubell, who won the 1968 Olympic 800-meter gold medal.

"When they return home they will be reporting that the marathon started one hour late. 'The Roads and Traffic Authority charged us 50,000 dollars (U.S. \$ 29,000) to construct road barriers, and they didn't. I think there will now be negotiation on the price.'"

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Water splashes as competitors paddle hard to gain speed at the start of the Men's K-2 (kayak doubles) 200 metres heat, Saturday, during the 29th Canoe World Championships on Lake Matyer, near Szeged in southern Hungary (AFP photo)

Murdoch to buy Manchester United — Report

LONDON (AP) — Media magnate Rupert Murdoch has reportedly made a 575 million pound bid to buy soccer giant Manchester United.

According to the Sunday Telegraph, Murdoch has already negotiated a deal with United chairman Martin Edwards. Edwards, the paper says, is selling his 14 percent stake in the club for 80 million pounds.

Although the reported move was described as pure speculation by officials of Murdoch's satellite TV company, BSkyB Sunday and there was no comment from the club, the prospect of his buying one of the world's most famous and financially successful clubs would make a huge impact on soccer business in Britain.

Through Sky TV, Murdoch has made sweeping changes to coverage of soccer in Britain with very few live games being shown on regular terrestrial stations on the BBC and ITV. Sky also has exclusive rights to cover England's games such as Saturday's European Championship qualifying round loss to Sweden.

Tim Allen, BSkyB's director of corporate communications, told Sky News: "The reports are speculation, but it's understood there have been negotiations."

The sale of England's wealthiest club, which was floated on the stock market in 1991, to BSkyB could give the broadcasting company a stranglehold on the television and marketing rights to Premier League football.

Manchester United's own television network called "MU TV" is preparing to launch later this week and, if the sale to Murdoch went through, it is likely that the only way of seeing the team play would be through pay-per-view TV.

Although United has a 55,000-seater stadium at Old Trafford, almost all the seats go to season ticket holders and the waiting list for the few that become available is several years long.

Murdoch's Fox Television network spent some \$360 million earlier this year on buying baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers.

Parma bid for Shearer — paper

ROME (R) — Italy's Parma have made a 40 billion lire (\$22.5 million) bid for Newcastle and England striker Alan Shearer, Gazzetta dello Sport said on Sunday.

It said Parma had launched a bid for Shearer in June but balked at Newcastle's \$33.8 million asking price and tried to sign Fiorentina's Argentine forward Gabriel Batistuta instead.

When Batistuta chose last month to stay at Fiorentina, Parma reopened negotiations with Newcastle who had lowered their asking price, Gazzetta said.

If Shearer moved to Parma he would join his former Newcastle team mate Faustino Asprilla in a formidable side which also includes Argentina's Juan Veron, France's Lilian Thuram and Italy centreback Fabio Cannavaro.

Gazzetta said the deal could prompt unsettled Italy striker Enrico Chiesa to leave Parma for AC Milan, who are searching for a striker following Dutch forward Patrick Kluivert's sudden departure for Barcelona.

China looks to clean sweep of China Grand Prix

BEIJING (AFP) — China has moved closer to a clean sweep of titles at the China table tennis Grand Prix by winning the women's singles, men's doubles and taking all the berths for the men's singles semi-finals, Xinhua reported Sunday.

Top women's seed and world number three Wang Nan beat seventh seed Sun Jin 21-12, 21-12, 23-21 to win the women's singles title in an all-Chinese final.

The men's doubles trophy went to Chinese pair Ma Lin and Qin Zhiqian who beat compatriots Wang Liqing and Yan Sen 21-16, 21-15.

In the quarter-finals of the men's singles, French, Austrian and Greek competition was wiped out — along with top seed Kong Linghui — leaving four Chinese players to compete for the semi-finals.

"The only hope to stop the hosts from a clean sweep lies in the women's doubles event, which has five non-Chinese pairs in the quarter-finals," Xinhua said.

The \$61,000 event, which finishes Sunday, features 140 players from 25 countries and regions.

Wang Nan won \$8,000 for her women's singles title while the winner of the men's singles title will take home \$10,000.

World champions still suffering from goal drought

REYKJAVIK (R) — Unheralded Iceland confirmed on Saturday what the world has suspected for some time — that France won the World Cup but still lack an effective strike force.

The world champions failed to shine in their opening qualifier for the European championship on Saturday with a 1-1 draw in the Icelandic capital's tiny stadium.

The draw will also inspire France's others opponents in group 4, especially Ukraine and Russia, the two other teams which have a reasonable chance of qualifying.

France's detractors say the host country won the World Cup without a reliable attacking force and Saturday's result added fuel to their fire and vividly showed that the team desperately needs effective strikers.

"I cannot blame the players. They did what I was expecting from them tonight," France's new coach Roger Lemerre said.

"We have had several opportunities but we failed to convert them into goals and this is disappointing."

"But I must say that we were unlucky, particularly during the second half," said Lemerre, who will find that blaming fate will find him few allies from a hostile French press.

France, who drew 2-2 in Austria in August in the first match after being crowned, are still looking for a win since the comprehensive 3-0 victory over a subdued Brazil in the World Cup final two months ago.

But captain Didier Deschamps refuses to admit that the poor results stem from over confidence.

"There is not much we can say. We were stronger technically and we played the match we were supposed to do but you can't say that we were too confident tonight," said Deschamps.

"It's obvious that people



French Zinedine Zidane (l) dribbles Iceland's counterpart Helgi Kolvidsson Saturday in Reykjavik, during their Euro soccer 2000 qualification match (AFP Photo)

are expecting more from us and we have to cope with their expectations but we can't be at our best each time," he said.

Lacking concentration, the world champions went a goal down when Rikhardur Dadason took advantage of a blunder by goalkeeper Fabien Barthez to slot home the opener in the 33rd minute.

Barthez claimed a foul.

"I went out to punch the ball but an Iceland striker fouled me and I was expecting the referee to give me a free-kick but I understood what was happening when someone patted my shoulder to tell me they had scored", Barthez said.

France reacted swiftly thanks to playmaker Zinedine Zidane, who offered a perfect cross to

former teammate Christophe Dugarry, who equalised three minutes later.

But apart from the single goal, France failed to shine and Iceland left the pitch cheered as heroes by 10,000 fans.

France had several opportunities to score but showed little imagination and were contained relatively comfortably by the powerful and consistent Icelandic defence.

"Iceland played as if it was an historic game for them. We made the mistake of playing in a complicated way."

"We will have to play more simply in the next games. It's what we should have done today in this sort of match," said Marseille midfielder Robert Pires.

France's next match is against Russia in Moscow in October and already looks crucial for both teams.

Russia, the seeded team of the group, were defeated 3-2 by Ukraine on Saturday and will presumably try to restore their qualification bid against France.

The French have a painful memory from their last outing in Moscow where they conceded the only defeat of their World Cup warm-up games last March.

"Another loss or draw will put France in a tricky situation and coach Lemerre's position would be questioned."

"Everybody will have a lot to lose," said defender Franck Leboeuf. "In Russia, it's going to be a do-or-die match."

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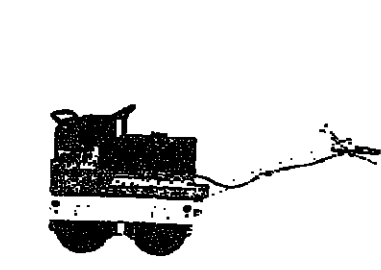
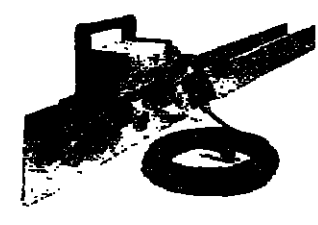
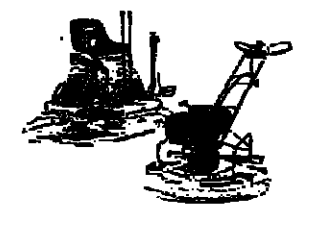
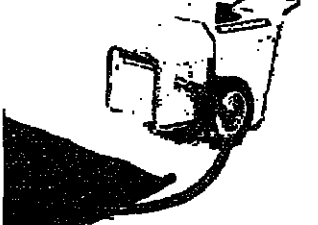
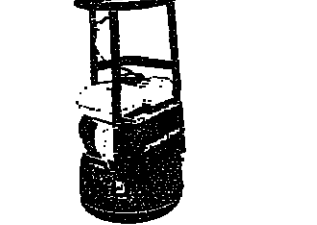

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'20 spies for Israel arrested in Lebanon'

BEIRUT (AP) — More than 20 people, including a woman, have been arrested on suspicion of spying for Israel, a Beirut newspaper reported Sunday.

Al Diyar newspaper said the arrests followed a security sweep carried out by the Lebanese army in the neighbourhood of Shiyah in Beirut's southern suburbs in the past few days.

The suspects were providing a Cyprus-based branch of the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, with information, the paper said, quoting unidentified "informed sources." It did not say what kind of information the suspects allegedly gave to Mossad.

The network was uncovered based on information from a Lebanese suspected of being a spy for Israel and of helping Israeli troops in the assassination of a guerrilla leader in south Lebanon last month, the paper said.

Hossam Al Amin, a commander of the Syrian-backed Shiite Amal guerrilla movement, was killed when a missile fired from an Israeli attack helicopter struck his car in south Lebanon.

The paper's report could not immediately be confirmed by security officials. The latest arrests were believed to be separate from a spy ring that the government said it uncovered on July 8.

Then, Lebanon accused 77 people of passing information to Israel on Lebanese and Syrian troop movements and the activities of Lebanese guerrillas. At the time, officials said 17 of the suspects were under arrest and the remaining 60 were at large.

Government Prosecutor Nasri Lahoud said the 77 faced charges for "the crimes of contacting the Israeli enemy and its agents" and passing information to them. If convicted, the suspects could face the death penalty.

Lebanon, which is technically at war with Israel, forbids contacts with the Jewish state.

'U.S. officials had plans to capture Ben Laden'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States had plans for a raid inside Afghanistan to capture alleged Islamist mastermind Osama Ben Laden months before the embassy bombings in Africa, the New York Times reported Sunday, quoting senior U.S. officials.

U.S. officials, however, decided against the kidnapping raid because of the risk involved to U.S. servicemen and Afghan civilians, the Times reported.

The raid was supposed to take place at an unspecified date in the second quarter of 1998, according to the Times.

The operation was drawn up once U.S. intelligence officials had broad information linking Ben Laden to a series of Islamist attacks on U.S. targets over the past years, the officials told the newspaper.

The CIA-devised plan was for the U.S. commandos to enter Afghanistan, kidnap Ben Laden and take him to the United States to face charges.

However, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director George Tenet and other top officials cancelled the plan because of the likelihood of a high casualty rate during the attack, according to the Times.

U.S. intelligence officials were still working on ways to capture Ben Laden when bombs ripped through the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, killing 263 people.



An undated recent file picture shows Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden in an undisclosed place inside Afghanistan (AFP photo)

Washington maintains that Ben Laden, a reclusive Saudi-born millionaire and supporter of Islamists, is responsible for the twin bombings in Africa.

In retaliation, the United States launched cruise missile strikes on targets in Afghanistan and Sudan with supposed connections with the millionaire.

Khamenei backs Khatami's order to arrest Islamists

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has backed an order from President Mohammad Khatami to arrest Islamic vigilantes who beat up two leading moderate officials, Iran's police chief said.

Brigadier General Reza Lofian told the official IRNA news agency the force had launched an investigation into the incident Friday "following orders from the leader to arrest the culprits."

"We have established intelligence units and are cooperating with the bodyguards of the two officials," Abdullah Nouri, vice president for social affairs and development, said.

Nouri and Mohajerani, leading reformers close to Khatami, were attacked in the streets of Tehran as they attended a mass funeral for 700 Iranian soldiers killed in the 1980-1988 war against Iraq.

The minister hurt a finger and was taken to a clinic for treatment while Nouri, a cleric, had his turban knocked off his head.

Khamenei is the chief commander of the armed forces, including the police, which takes orders directly from the supreme leader.

Khatami issued a decree Saturday to the ministries of intelligence and interior, both of which he controls, to launch a "thorough investigation" and crackdown on the Islamists, who act as self-styled guardians of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"We cannot tolerate the propagation of violence whenever it comes from. The authorities must not dither or show mercy in dealing with this ugly act from a small group who bear vengeance against the rule of law and freedom," he said.

The Islamists often attack street rallies held by critics, moderate newspapers and movie theatres showing films they deem un-Islamic. They also harass young couples as part of a drive to fight "decadent" Western culture.



Revellers splash a giant statue of the elephant-headed Hindu God Ganesha after dragging it into the ocean on the last day of the Ganapati celebrations Saturday. Ganesha who's birthday is celebrated all over India, but especially in Maharashtra state, is believed to bring good luck and reduce obstacles. Tens of thousands of residents take part in the annual celebrations on Mumbai's Chowpatty beach (AFP photo)

Escaped Hamas militant claims PNA torture

CAIRO (AFP) — Hamas militant Imad Awadallah, who escaped from a Palestinian prison on Aug. 15, accused Palestinian authorities of torturing him in a letter received by AFP on Sunday.

"God the All Powerful granted me the chance to escape from my Palestinian Authority prison after four months and eight days, or to be exact 128 days," Awadallah said in the letter, dated Aug. 18.

"I was subjected during this time to suffering and torture that nothing human could have helped me to survive," it said, adding that he endured only "by the grace of God."

Awadallah was arrested in April on charges of involvement in the murder of Mohammed Sharif, head of security in the West Bank, who was found riddled with bullets and mangled by an explosion in Ramallah.

The letter said Palestinian officials, including Colonel Jibril Rajoub, head of security in the West Bank, and Tayeb Abdul Rehman, an adviser to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, tried to force Awadallah into confessing to Sharif's murder.

"I told them to find someone else to besmirch the memory of the martyrs," the letter said.

Police accused Awadallah and his brother Adel, the alleged leader of Izzedin Al Kassam, the armed wing of Hamas in the West Bank, of killing Sharif in a struggle for control of Hamas military activities in the West Bank.

But Hamas has rejected this account, accusing the Palestinian police of working with Israel to murder Sharif, who was held responsible for bombings in which dozens of Israelis died.

Hamas has also charged that Awadallah is dead and that police fabricated reports of his escape to hide the murder.

The letter gave no details of his escape or his current location.

Syria assails Turkish-Israeli 'suspect alliance'

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria on Sunday attacked an Israeli plan for the creation of a regional security alliance with Turkey, saying it would create a dangerous situation in the region.

"All sincere appeals to the Turkish government have fallen on deaf ears and it has escalated the situation by threatening to take provocative military measures, directing itself firmly towards a suspicious alliance" with Israel, wrote Al Baath, the journal of Syria's ruling Baath party.

Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu said in an interview with a Turkish newspaper Saturday that he would propose a joint regional security system in talks with Turkish counterpart Mesut Yilmaz who arrives in Israel on Monday.

"We are working to transform the Israeli-Turkish cooperation in the Middle East into a regional security system," Netanyahu told Milliyet.

"We [Turkey and Israel] are surrounded by radical regimes that are developing ballistic missiles with non-conventional warheads and that are capable of firing them," he added.

Turkey and Israel signed a military cooperation accord in February 1996 provoking anger among a number of Arab and Muslim nations, particularly Egypt, Iran and Syria.

refusal to listen to Arab and Muslim warnings showed it had "turned its back on the rules of good neighbourliness and chosen to alienate itself from countries who want to preserve them, creating a dangerous situation."

"This alliance is condemnable and Yilmaz's visit to Israel is an aggressive initiative that must be firmly challenged by Arab and Islamic nations," the paper said.

Yilmaz's visit will be the second by a Turkish prime minister to Israel since 1993.

He arrived in Jordan on Sunday on the first leg of the regional tour that will also take him to the Palestinian territories.

refusal to listen to Arab and Muslim warnings showed it had "turned its back on the rules of good neighbourliness and chosen to alienate itself from countries who want to preserve them, creating a dangerous situation."

"This alliance is condemnable and Yilmaz's visit to Israel is an aggressive initiative that must be firmly challenged by Arab and Islamic nations," the paper said.

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Israeli court gives green light to extradition of U.S. fugitive

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli court Sunday gave the green light to the extradition to the United States of a Jewish-American teenager wanted for murder in the state of Maryland.

The Jerusalem district court said that Samuel Sheinbein, 18, wanted for the September 1997 murder of a 19-year-old neighbour, Enrique Tello Jr, should be extradited to face trial in the United States.

Sheinbein was arrested by Israeli police after fleeing the United States shortly after the murder and has since battled extradition on the grounds that he inherited Israeli citizenship from his Israeli-born father.

Israeli nationals may not be extradited under Israeli law, but the Israeli authorities have rejected Sheinbein's claim to Israeli nationality and backed the U.S. request for extradition.

Attorney General Eliakim Rubinstein ruled in November that Sheinbein, who had never

previously been to Israel, could not claim citizenship since his father left Israel as a child before the adoption of a 1952 law which automatically grants citizenship to anyone born of Israeli parents.

The Jerusalem court ruled that while Sheinbein is an Israeli citizen he did not have sufficient links with the State of Israel to merit a rejection of the extradition request.

"The defendant is an Israeli citizen from birth," Judge Moshe Ravid said in the 75-page verdict. "It is not possible to take away the citizenship of an Israeli citizen even if it was given on the basis of misinformation."

"Despite this, the defendant is extraditable because under the extradition law, the meaning of the word 'citizen' carries with it strong ties to the country of citizenship."

Sheinbein now has 30 days to appeal against the ruling and his Israeli lawyer, former justice

minister David Libai, said an appeal would be filed.

"This is very strange reasoning," he said of the court ruling. "The state did not even dare to argue what the judge concluded. I am very surprised."

"It is a very imaginative judgement," he told AFP. "I am going to appeal and I believe the Supreme Court will reach the correct decision."

"It is up to the Knesset [the Israeli parliament] to change the law, not the judge."

Libai also said the Sheinbein family "fears that he will be killed if he goes back to the U.S.," although Maryland authorities have said they would not seek the death penalty since Sheinbein was a juvenile at the time of the crime.

The United States has exerted pressure on Israel to hand over the fugitive and members of the U.S. Congress even raised the possibility of cutting off aid if Sheinbein was not extradited.

Speculation builds in U.S. as Starr prepares Clinton sex report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton returned here from three weeks of vacation and travels to Europe late Saturday, just as speculation heats up on the impact of a report by independent Counsel Kenneth Starr on the Monica Lewinsky sex-and-lies scandal.

The report, due to be delivered within the next weeks, is likely to have such damaging details that some believe Clinton will be censured by Congress — a major embarrassment, but far short of being forced from office.

Others say Starr's report will be so personally and politically devastating it will force Clinton to resign or face impeachment by Congress.

"Pending report already weighs on Washington," the Los Angeles Times headlined Sunday, summarising the mood: "The buzz builds."

The Washington Post reported that the White House is expecting Starr's report to be full of sexually explicit details, and more politically damaging than first believed.

Four years and some \$20 million ago Starr was appointed to look into the Clinton's ties to Whitewater, a failed land venture in Arkansas.

Yet the final Starr report is "almost certain" to be limited to the Lewinsky scandal, according to the Post.

"Some of [Clinton's] advisers are convinced that Starr will now see fit to spell out not only the times and places of the sexual encounters, but also explicit details in order to charge that the president knowingly lied in his January 17 deposition in the Paula Jones lawsuit."

Clinton insists that he did not lie under oath in the Jones sexual harassment case — which was later dis-

missed — because of the legal definition of a sexual relationship.

To show that Clinton indeed lied — a potentially impeachable offence — Starr must now give explicit details of the sex acts.

Some Clinton advisers worry that "unsavoury and even odd sexual behaviour could be included in the report," according to the Post.

Another Clinton adviser told the Post that the president was "sad" and "disoriented," a mood made worse because (wife) "Hillary has not forgiven him."

One senior Clinton source described the mood inside the White House to the New York Daily News as "total chaos."

"Nobody is managing this crisis," the source told the Daily News. "The loop is down to two people — Bill and Hillary Clinton. They're doing it all themselves."

Other sources said the mood at the presidential mansion was "unbelievably depressing" and "somewhere close to despair."

A senior Clinton political counsellor told the paper that the sex-and-lies scandal has energised Clinton-haters and demoralised his supporters.

The likely result: fewer votes for the Democratic party in the upcoming November congressional elections; a big Republican party victory; and an overwhelming Republican majority in Congress.

This would make any possible impeachment easier, the political counsellor said.

The president's Aug. 17 nationally televised confession of his affair with then 21-year-old White House intern Lewinsky has done little to increase his support.

Glendening, a Democrat who is running for re-election, asked for Vice President Al Gore — and not president Clinton — to come to an upcoming fund raising event.

Thursday U.S. Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman, who had been a staunch Clinton supporter, took to the Senate floor to assail the president for having lied to the public about his relationship with Lewinsky.

Lieberman, the first Democratic senator to attack the president on the issue, said he felt "deep disappointment and personal anger" toward Clinton.

ship with Lewinsky.

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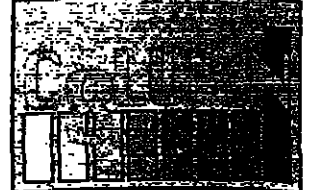
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Diana's bored brother to leave South Africa

LONDON (AP) — Princess Diana's brother, Earl Spencer, is bored with life in South Africa and plans to return permanently to Britain early next year and run the family estate, Althorp. The Sunday Telegraph reported. Spencer, 34, who complained that media attention on his failing marriage and his then-wife's problems with eating, drugs and alcohol drove him from Britain, moved to Cape Town four years ago.

Dutch prince's 72nd birthday a historical moment

THE HAGUE (AP) — As birthdays go, this one couldn't have been more historic for the House of Orange. Prince Claus, the husband of Queen Beatrix, celebrated his 72nd birthday Sunday — coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the crowning of former Queen Wilhelmina and the 50th anniversary of the day her daughter, Princess Juliana, became queen. The German-born prince was marking his birthday quietly at home with family and close friends, Dutch media reported.

Johnny Hallyday, still a major star at home

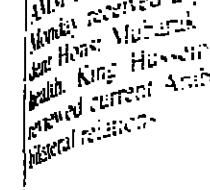
PARIS (AFP) — Middle-aged French rock star Johnny Hallyday showed he can still pack them in when he attracted nearly 80,000 spectators, including President Jacques Chirac, to a concert late Saturday. Virtually ignored abroad but still a major star at home, Hallyday, 55, landed in the French national stadium in the Paris suburb of Saint Denis on the giant stage by wire from a helicopter to launch a three-hour spectacle complete with all the latest sound and light gadgetry.

TV programme on Mother Teresa at the Vatican

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Pope John Paul II received British film star Ben Kingsley, Indian television actor Kabir Bedi and Argentinian model Valeria Mazza, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. The three were recording a television programme at the Vatican on Mother Teresa, the Macedonian-born nun famous for her work for the poor in India, who died a year ago. Kingsley is famous for his 1982 film portrayal of Indian pacifist Mahatma Gandhi, while Bedi acted in the Indian television series "Sandokan". Mazza, though of Argentinian origin, is well known in Italy.

The wealthy of China should be prosecuted for bigamy

BEIJING (AFP) — The wealthy of China, who are openly taking one or more mistresses, should be prosecuted for bigamy, a women's official said Sunday. "The number of cases in which married men have concubines or support mistresses is rising," said Lin Huiyu, vice chairwoman of the Guangdong Provincial Women's Federation. She said such "ugly activities" were common all through the booming coastal province which borders Hong Kong and called for action to crack down on such behaviour — which is largely ignored at present.



King Mubarak

King Mubarak received a letter from the House of Commons on Sunday, King Hassan II of Morocco received current Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa.

Rege in bid

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Arab League for Lockerb

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